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Elizabeth Wilson
LABOUR'S PROGRAMME

1945
Welfare state

1982
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page 6

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NEW STATESMAN Vol 104 No 2686 10 September 1982

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Genuine social contract required

SINCE THE 1978-79 Winter of Discontent, the TUC has been facing both ways on incomes policy. Wednesday's debate and voting at its Brighton annual conference has in practice done little to change that situation. For the Left will continue to insist that no planning for incomes is politically (or for that matter practically) possible, unless the rest of the economy is also fully planned. And the Right will continue to believe that an effective incomes policy is *the* key to the problem of how to restore growth in the British economy, without hitting at once the problems of inflation and a run on the pound that have knocked previous Labour governments off the rails. Each side will remain unconvinced by the arguments of the other and, on past performance, it is an open question which faction will prevail when it comes to drafting the economic sections of the next Labour manifesto.

To say by way of compromise, as Moss Evans of the Transport and General Workers has said, that Labour should not be opposed to a 'progressive' incomes policy and that such a policy need not be inconsistent with free collective bargaining solves the rhetorical problem for purposes of debate in the TUC and elsewhere. It solves nothing else. If Labour is to have any chance of presenting a credible face to the electorate next time, it must have a policy to place in the intellectual and political hole that Mr Evans and others would prefer just to paper over.

For, if there is no thought-out policy on incomes to offer to the country, the middle is blown out of the main economic claim that Labour will be putting forward – its claim that it will pursue a set of economic policies that will reduce unemployment to one million by the end of its first Parliament. As this year's TUC Economic Review correctly said: 'It is relatively easy to stimulate growth in one year, the major problem is sustaining growth'.

TO DATE, Labour economic policy in these areas (at least as revealed by Peter Shore as shadow Chancellor) has been decidedly coy. Almost everything he says is confined to the impact of the first year of a Labour reflation package. He indicates comfortingly that the computer forecasts on which he is relying do not indicate fatal rocks of deficit or inflation ahead. But after the British experience of the past 20 years, the electorate as a whole is unlikely to accept such comfort: and it will be right not to do so.

For, if an incoming Labour government means what it says about going for a 4 per cent annual growth rate in a world where all the other major industrial countries (with the still possible exception of France) are sticking to recession in the hope of slaying the dragon Inflation, certain circles must be squared. Such an economic policy pursued in isolation would blow up inside months rather than years. It could only be contained, either in combination with unprecedentedly severe devaluation of sterling, protectionism to keep out exports and reduction in real living standards – or by unexpectedly low average levels of wage increase. In practice even the Alternative Economic Strategy based on protection for the British economy would also require a low level of real wage increase for a period, while extra resources were transferred to a rejuvenation of domestic industry and commerce.

IT WAS BEING ARGUED at Brighton this week that the present recession and the Thatcher government between them were so severely undermining the organised trade union movement that the rate of increase in wages during the next phase of expansion would automatically be less – or at least that the TUC would now be able to deliver wage settlements negotiated by members in its affiliated unions of a kind convenient to the economic policies of an incoming Labour government next time. But the reality is that the TUC would be even less able to perform this function for the next Labour government (even if it had any right to try) than it was for the one between 1974 and 1979. Unless, therefore, a policy is established and announced in advance, history will simply repeat itself. Labour in office would stumble unwillingly under pressure into some hasty and inequitable botch of an incomes policy, designed to stave off pressures of one kind or another in the financial markets.

The time has now come for Labour to abandon euphemism and to state clearly that reserve powers will be required to moderate the level of wage increases. It is an illusion to believe that any permanent prices and incomes policy can be devised. But, in the situation that will face the next Labour government, a basic incomes policy of some kind will be essential, provided that it is set in an overall socialist economic policy frame. This must include reflation for the economy as a whole, policies for a minimum wage, social control of the economy, industrial democracy and much greater openness about the way in which state resources are allocated.

In all these processes, the trades unions must play a central role. The new way forward must be something quite different to merely a 'Social Contract Mark II'. It would be a real test of the socialism of the trades unions. They would have to go much further collectively than merely being the mutually competitive champions of competitive interest groups. Judging from Brighton there is still a long road to travel. □

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John Hatton reports from the town where more than half the population may soon be unemployed

British Steel may kill Scunthorpe

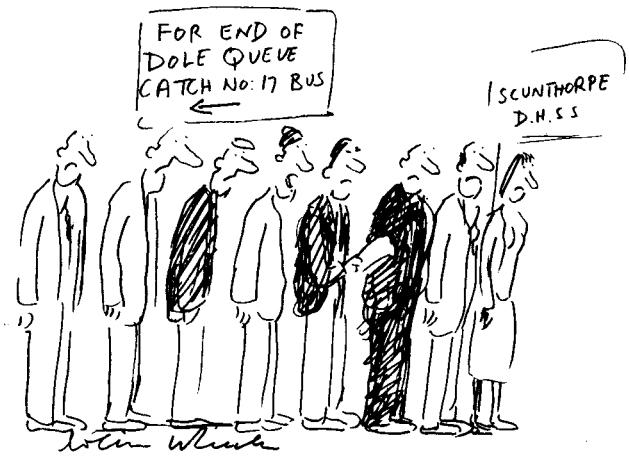
IF THE British Steel Corporation's Scunthorpe works close down, as now seems highly probable, the Humberside town will have easily the highest rate of unemployment in the country. The rate is already 29 per cent, and the closure of the steel works would make it over 50 per cent.

An anticipated profit at Scunthorpe's steel works of £29 million this year has been converted into an actual loss of £500,000 a week as production has slumped to 60 per cent of capacity, with 1200 of the remaining 8300 workforce on short-time working and two of the four blast furnaces closed. It is the most extreme example of the present ills of BSC, caused more by a depressed home market than by the marginal influence of American tariffs on steel imports.

In Scunthorpe's case the problem has been made much worse by the fact that its production of sections and plates is duplicated by the larger and more modern Teesside plant. As demand for this type of steel has declined, BSC has understandably followed a 'minimum cost route', transferring orders from Scunthorpe to Teesside to keep the blast furnace there in operation. Consequently the future of BSC's Scunthorpe works is now even more precarious than that of Ravenscraig, the plant which was regarded until recently as the most likely to be axed when chairman Ian MacGregor puts his 'revised configuration' to Mrs Thatcher early next month.

BSC and its press officers are anxious that the appalling mess that the corporation is in should not be too widely publicised. After all, despite empty order books, Ian MacGregor, ever the optimist, has predicted a profit for the current financial year. BSC has therefore denied that Scunthorpe is threatened. Nevertheless, it is common knowledge that the least Scunthorpe can expect later this month is 1000 job losses. Departmental managers were told last Thursday to 'cut back hard' on staffing levels so that when MacGregor takes his decision Scunthorpe looks in better shape.

Union leaders at the works were told of the job losses a fortnight ago, but have been fiercely denying that the corporation has any such thing in mind. A story in *The Times* and the *Guardian* was denied as 'contemptible' and 'irresponsible speculation' by the divisional officer of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, Ted Hardacre, who must have been embarrassed on Monday when BSC finally admitted that it would shortly be announcing further job cuts in the town.



However, the important part of the story is not the cosy little cover-up operated by unions and management at the works; it is the effect on Scunthorpe, a substantial town with a population of 66,000. Scunthorpe has the highest dependence on one industry of any town in the country. At its peak, over 60 per cent of the population were employed by BSC, with most of the rest working in industries which service it, such as road haulage and railways.

By now, according to a projection made by the borough council in 1971, the town's population should have been 91,000. In fact, since contraction in the steel industry started five years ago, the population has actually declined by 4,000. There is little incentive for people to stay, especially as other industries have not filled the gap left by BSC. Last year English Industrial Estates built 42 advanced factories in the town. Ten months later 38 of them are still empty. □

Rick Rogers on evidence of lead pollution

Councils call for fuel ban

EIGHTY-FIVE per cent of local authorities in the UK now support a ban on lead in petrol, claims a survey carried out by the Campaign for Leadfree Air (CLEAR). Out of 100 authorities which have formally debated the issue, 85 voted for an end to lead being added to petrol.

As well as city councils in Leeds, Bradford, Bristol, Norwich and Newcastle and 12 London boroughs, towns such as Colchester and Crawley are also calling for 'urgent action' as local checks on lead levels found disturbing evidence of pollution. Crawley has discovered 'levels in the town centre comparable with those obtained for large cities in Britain'. Four authorities, including Leicester, refuse to make public their findings.

Of 154 authorities questioned on checking for lead pollution, only 45 per cent had monitored or were planning to monitor lead levels in air and dust. Many have decided not to set up a monitoring programme because the main source of lead pollution – leaded petrol – is outside their control. Central government action is required. Other reasons given for not checking lead levels are financial restraints, ignorance of the lead issue, and a belief by rural authorities that they are unlikely to be affected by such pollution.

In all, 210 authorities were involved in the survey, 43 per cent of the UK total. CLEAR director Des Wilson says the survey reveals a high degree of concern by urban authorities. It is felt that, at this stage, authority-backed education programmes on the dangers of lead may be more useful than further monitoring.

The report on the survey concludes: 'Having undertaken monitoring, and established that the problem of environmental lead is a serious one, local authorities discover they are unable to take any local action because the main source of lead pollution is emission from car exhausts.'

In May last year, the government announced that the lead content in petrol must be reduced from 0.40 to 0.15 grams per litre by the end of 1985. Despite growing evidence that this is an inadequate response to pollution levels, the government has refused to consider further measures such as phasing in leadfree petrol, new cars to run on leadfree fuel, and an earlier date for phasing out lead in petrol. □

Rick Rogers's special report, Lead Poison, *is available for £1.95 from New Statesman, 10 Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ.*

Fiona Mallon on an unexpected tax bill

Teachers may go to jail

FIVE BRITISH teachers who are temporarily working overseas are facing huge tax demands and possible imprisonment because of a change of policy by the Inland Revenue in Singapore.

The teachers went to Singapore in January on a one-year exchange visit. Before leaving Britain they were advised by the League for the Exchange of Commonwealth Teachers that they would not be subject to UK or Singapore tax while abroad. However, on 5 April all five received large tax demands from the Singapore authorities.

One of the teachers, Paul Ellis from Sheffield, explains: 'The amount was so ridiculous (£3,000 between the five teachers) that we ignored it all feeling that it was obviously some mistake. Not so. On 29 April all five of us attended a meeting with Mr A.S.S.Ow of the Singapore Inland Revenue where we were told that we were all subject to Singapore tax under Article 14 of the Double Taxation Treaty Singapore-UK 1967. We were warned of the consequences of not abiding by Singapore tax laws.'

According to the UK Inland Revenue Technical Division there has been no change in the treaty. 'What is new is that it was not until 1982 that Singapore exercised its right to tax the remuneration of exchange teachers.'

The League for the Exchange of Commonwealth Teachers (LECT) admitted in a letter to Mr Ellis in autumn 1981 that several tax difficulties had arisen. At that point the teachers had not finally accepted their posts, but LECT did not clarify the tax position and failed to inform the teachers that they might be taxed during their exchange year. According to Mr Ellis, 'Because I was never informed that I would be liable for any payment of tax my budget was fixed accordingly; indeed, if I had been given the correct information before I left the UK simple economics would have told me that I could not have afforded to go.'

LECT is looking into the possibility of an *ex gratia* payment to the teachers, but it adds that 'the treasurer wishes to make it quite clear that in his view there is a moral obligation to pay tax to the government of the country in which you are living'. This is little comfort to Mr Ellis and his colleagues, who are now in a desperate position. 'I have three weeks to pay and I do not have the finances', Mr Ellis says. 'I may well soon face the prospect of going to jail in a country 6,000 miles from the UK for reasons which are and have been totally beyond my control. □

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Michael Coren hears of Asians' fears

Racism sold in the street

EAST LONDON Asian groups, trade union branches and political parties have united in an attempt to ban a stall set up by the National Front in Brick Lane's famous street market. The stall is stocked with Nazi literature and 'protected' by a sizeable group of skinheads.

Local National Front activists have been planning what they describe as a 'coup' for some time, with one member commenting: 'Wogs and Jews have run all the markets round here for too long, let's give the English a chance. It's our right, isn't it?'

But according to Ian Mikado, the local Labour MP, this may not be the case. He is pushing for prosecution of the stall owners and told a march of over 400 people protesting at the stall that there is 'every expectation of the stallholders being prosecuted in the near future'.

Local Asians are understandably worried by the activities of racists in the Brick Lane area – clothing worker Altab Ali was murdered four years ago and violent attacks by young gangs are a constant threat. A young Bengali who lives off Brick Lane says: 'I was beaten up only two weeks ago. The attack would probably have killed my mother or my grandfather. When is something going to be done?' □

John Sturrock/Network

NF stall in Brick Lane

Michael Pilsworth looks at the cable television race

Watch now, pay later

A MAJOR acquisition last week by Racal Electronics, the defence and communications group, puts the company at the front of the race to establish 30-channel cable television in Britain's main cities. But the deal also gives Racal access to technology that threatens the whole ecology of British television.

Racal has acquired 50 per cent of Oak Industries of California, an electronics company that has pioneered the development of 'addressable' cable TV systems which make it possible for cable companies to bill their customers for individual programmes and films that they watch each month. These 'pay-per-view' systems are used in America to charge viewers for live relays of sporting events and for big feature films. The Rolling Stones' concert in Los Angeles last year was bought by a pay-per-view cable operator.

Following Racal's deal with Oak Industries a new company will be set up, called Racal-Oak Communications, which will employ about 1,000 people in the UK. Kenneth Baker, the minister responsible for information technology, has welcomed the venture; he said it would not have been possible without the encouragement of the Department of Industry.

Not everyone share's the minister's enthusiasm for pay-per-view systems. George Howard, chairman of the BBC, described them last week as a major threat to British broadcasting. The fear is that cable operators with access to addressable technology will be able to buy exclusive television rights to sporting events, films and concerts and thereby deprive ordinary viewers (witnout access to cable television, or without the ticket price) of programmes which they now enjoy for the price of a TV licence.

The BBC chairman has asked the Hunt committee on cable television, which is due to report at the end of this month, to ban pay-per-view systems altogether. However, if Hunt were to make such a recommendation, it seems unlikely that the government would accept it. The fact that Kenneth Baker and the Department of Industry have 'welcomed' and 'encouraged' Racal's move into pay-per-view technology suggests that the government has made up its mind without waiting for Hunt. □

Supporters of the SDP still think Labour and the Tories have the best policies. Peter Kellner reports

SDP voters have no faith in their party

EIGHTEEN months after its launch, the SDP has failed to convince any except a tiny number of Britain's voters that the party has the answers to the country's main problems.

As part of MORI's latest monthly survey of public opinion for the *Daily Star*, electors were asked which party had the best policies on each of five issues. The results (see table) are published here for the first time. Only 2 or 3 per cent nominated the SDP as having the best policies on any issue. The Liberals fared better, but not much. Adding together the figures for the Liberals and Social Democrats (and the small number who replied 'Alliance', without plumping for a single party), the highest Liberal/SDP score was for their policies on unemployment. Together they scored 10 per cent.

In the same poll MORI found that 24 per cent of those giving a voting intention would vote for the Alliance. There is, clearly, a large, soft under-belly of Alliance 'supporters' who do not think it has the best policies. As the figures in the two right-hand columns of the table show, the SDP's under-belly is the softest of all. On each of the five issues more than three-quarters of the people who say they would vote SDP failed to nominate the party as having the best policies. Indeed, on every single issue more SDP supporters back the policies of another party rather than their own: Labour on unemployment; the Tories on law and order, and inflation; and *both* parties score better among SDP voters on pay and wages, and industrial relations.

If Labour can take some comfort in the SDP's poor image, it can take little comfort from its own. On only one issue – unemployment – is Labour clearly in the lead over the other parties. But even here, only 32 per cent of the public think Labour has the best policies. 36 per cent – that's 14 million people – say they don't know. On inflation, pay and wages, and law and order, the Tories are clearly in the lead. Moreover Tories tend to be more loyal than Labour supporters to their own party's policies. Only on unemployment is the faith of Labour supporters in Labour policies (71 per cent) substantially greater than the faith of Tory supporters in Tory policies (48 per cent). □

MORI's survey was conducted among a representative quota sample of 1916 electors at 173 sampling points throughout Great Britain between 19 and 24 August 1982. The sample contained 721 people who said they would vote Conservative, 477 Labour, 187 Liberal and 172 SDP. © MORI 1982

Q. Which party has the best policies on each of the following issues?
(Figues in percentages)

	All voters saying ...					Con voters saying	Lab voters saying	Lib voters saying	SDP voters saying
	Con	Lab	Lib	SDP	Don't know	Con	Lab	Lib	SDP
Unemployment	22	32	6	3	36	48	71	36	23
Prices/inflation	44	19	4	2	29	79	51	32	18
Pay/wages	35	26	5	2	31	71	63	30	14
Trade unions/ industrial relations	29	32	4	3	30	56	63	31	17
Law and order	45	14	4	2	35	73	42	28	10

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PETER KELLNER, Political Editor

Tony Benn and the 'scapegoat factor'

THIS WEEKEND various left-wing groups within the Labour Party will gather to plan their resistance to – well, to what? 'A purge', say the Left. 'The national executive's determination to uphold the party constitution', says Michael Foot. Doubtless the media will have a field day, distorting every argument in sight and painting, yet again, a picture of a party being torn asunder by left-wing 'extremists'.

The reality, as opposed to the demonology, of the event will, I strongly suspect, be very different. Once the rhetoric and breastbeating are stripped away, the challenge from the 'resistance' faction will be non-existent. Unless Labour's right-wing behaves very stupidly (an important qualification I shall come to a little later), the far Left has had its day. It can publish news-sheets, hold meetings, organise marches, capture headlines and cause embarrassment; but, fundamentally, it is now in retreat.

Consider: this time last year Tony Benn was contesting the deputy leadership of the Labour Party and gathering the votes that very nearly gave him victory. The left-wing controlled the national executive and most of its sub-committees. In the two years since the general election the Left had scored an almost unbroken run of victories on both policy and constitutional issues.

Then it all started to go wrong. Tony Benn lost the deputy leadership contest. The Left lost its majority on the NEC. Policy proposals that, however sensible in principle, scared the daylights out of the shadow cabinet (such as wholesale bank nationalisation), were defeated. The Militant Tendency was finally declared to be in violation of the party constitution. Trade union leaders, employing all the intellectual and philosophical rigour traditionally associated with the control of block-votes and purse-strings, decided that peace would break out. Tony Benn decided not to challenge Denis Healey again.

This month's party conference is likely to see an extension rather than a reversal of that whole process. The proposal to set up a register will be approved. The Left will probably lose at least one place on the NEC (Les Huckfield's) and may lose others. In the policy debates, Michael Foot will find he has enough room to construct a general election manifesto to his liking without having to defy conference or the NEC (as Harold Wilson used regularly to do) to get his way.

THIS ANALYSIS, I know, will not meet with universal agreement. As I have remarked before, both left-wingers and right-wingers find it in their interest to inflate the impact and importance of the far Left. It is one of the few things that Tony Benn has in common with John Golding, and *Tribune* with the *Daily Mail*.

There are various reasons why such differing people and papers should combine to sustain the mythology of left-wing power. As the next general election approaches, one of the most potent for the Right is what might be termed the 'scapegoat factor'. If Labour loses the election, the Right will be looking for scapegoats. It takes little imagination to guess where they will look.

My argument is that the Left no longer poses a serious threat to Labour's election prospects, even in the terms in which the Right normally defines that threat. That is, for all the noise the far Left can still make, it has lost its power to impose its will on the people or sections of the party machinery that matter, or the manifesto promises the party will make. If Labour promises to stop the cruise and Trident programmes, for example, it will not be because Mr Foot has been forced to make such promises, but because he wants to. Equally, whenever Mr Foot wants to muster the votes he needs to defeat a left-wing policy he specially dislikes, he can.

If Mr Foot, the shadow cabinet and the NEC mess things up from now on, it will be their own fault, and not Tony Benn's or his supporters'.

But if the far Left is, for all intents and purposes, impotent (at least until after the next election), it follows that it cannot be blamed by the Right if the party fails to recover in popularity. If Mr Foot, the shadow cabinet and the NEC mess things up from now on, it will be their own fault, and not Tony Benn's or his supporters.

Mr Foot's own position illustrates the point. It can scarcely be surprising that he finds himself on the defensive when the opinion polls show him to be the most unpopular leader any major British party has had since polling began. Nor is it surprising that some MPs and trade union leaders would like him to resign.

Last Sunday, on Tyne Tees Television's *Face the Press*, Mr Foot dismissed any suggestion that he would resign as 'stuff and nonsense'. Even so, Mr Foot is to some degree on probation. He needs to make a good speech to this year's party conference, to give some rather more effective television interviews, to re-establish his authority among Labour MPs at Westminster, and to start recovering ground in the opinion polls. On these things Mr Foot is largely the master of his own fate.

Now he may fail. In that case, the pressure for him to resign could become irresistible. That pressure, though, is coming from the Right, not the Left. It is only the right-wing union leaders, like Roy Grantham and Sir John Boyd, who are so far fanning the 'Foot must go' flames. If they succeed, and Labour is thrust into a new leadership contest, it will be impossible to blame the Left this time for precipitating a public battle between the party's wings.

HOW THE MILITANT Tendency is handled after conference will provide the other immediate test for the Right. Mr Foot and the party's new general secretary, James Mortimer, want to pursue a minimalist strategy: that is, if Militant continues to function as it has up to now, they would seek to expel only a handful of people – members of Militant's editorial board, and prospective parliamentary candidates such as Pat Wall. Neither Mr Foot nor Mr Mortimer has the slightest wish to 'purge' either the majority of Militant activists, or the members of any other group.

If they succeed in limiting the anti-Militant operation in this way, then there is a fair chance that the 'anti-register' lobby will wither away. There is no better person to foil an aspirant martyr than a reluctant hangman. A few punch-ups with local constituencies will be unavoidable – and for those right-wingers who seriously want to put the Militant controversy behind them, keeping Eric Heffer as chairman of the Organisation Committee would be the best way to ensure that the punch-ups are contained with as little harm to the party as possible.

But suppose the new NEC votes to replace Eric Heffer; and suppose a right-inclined Organisation Committee starts picking battles with 20, or 50, or a hundred constituency parties who are thought to harbour low-grade Militant apparatchiks? Instead of a tricky but feasible operation to neutralise Militant's harmful but marginal influence, the party would find itself plunged into a much more destructive internal war. And again, the blame for the decisive tactical mistake would lie with the Right, not the Left.

Neither Mr Foot's survival as party leader, nor a successful, limited operation to decapitate Militant, can ensure that the party mounts an effective general election campaign, even less win it. What these two episodes will demonstrate is the capacity of Labour's inside Left, centre and Right to act together rationally and tolerantly. This loose coalition has 12, perhaps 18, months of almost untrammelled power in which to restore Labour's fortunes. They can claim the credit if they succeed; they must carry the blame if they fail. □

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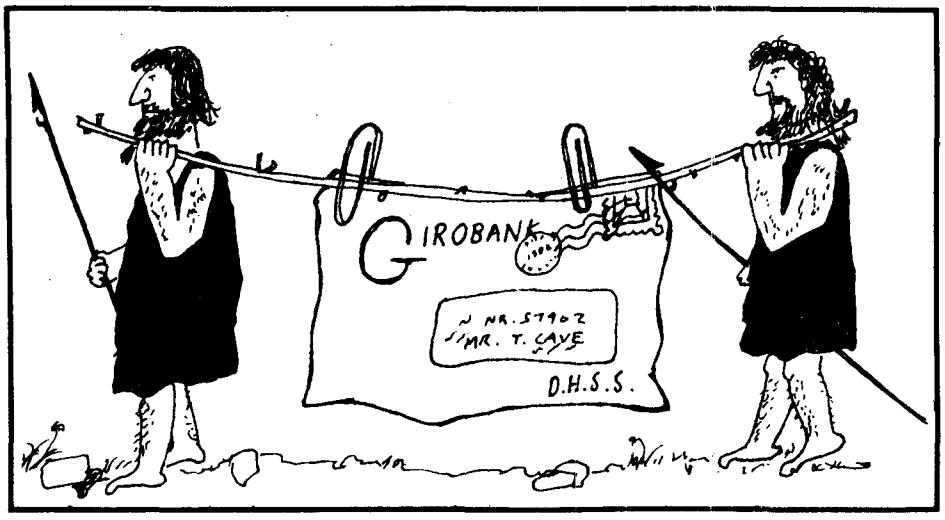
According to our needs

ELIZABETH WILSON continues our series of articles on policies for Labour with a critique of attitudes towards the welfare state.



All drawings: Will Self

AT A TIME when the 'welfare state' is under savage attack from the right it may seem political madness to challenge it from the left. Yet we must. For the Labour Party future programme for welfare still harks back to the vision of 1945. When the whole base of welfare is being hacked away, it is tempting to return to the familiar comfort of the well-tried formula. But we can't. For the truth is that the way in which the welfare state went wrong is complex and the way in which we must reconstruct it is also complex.

The 'welfare state' in fact never existed as a coherent whole – it was itself a propaganda slogan – and different forms of welfare provision were based on different principles and had different effects. The funding of the National Health Service from general taxation, for example, was genuinely redistributive, while the national insurance system for unemployment merely redistributed income within the working class. The 'meritocratic' educational system from the start favoured the children of managerial and professional parents, rather than the daughters and sons of the working class.

Yet there is a more general criticism to be made of the postwar welfare state: it was based on a model of the way most people lived that did not fit the reality (and fits it much less today); and was also strongly ideological. The Beveridge report asserted the centrality of the nuclear family with a wage earner, a dependent wife and children and consciously aimed to encourage marriage and procreation, not as part of a conspiracy against women to drive them back into the home (indeed women were desperately needed in the work force after the second world war), but because it was assumed that this was how most people lived, wanted to live, and should live. The social democratic ideal of welfare built a collectivist welfare system of public provision, based on an ideology of community spirit and egalitarianism, on the base of the private, in-turned small family with its loyalty to immediate kin rather than to outsiders. This family was perceived as 'natural' and therefore somehow outside capitalism; and the purpose of welfare was to redistribute income and resources in order that it should have the best possible soil in which to flower.

In practice what it meant was that – as a *Daily Telegraph* journalist put it in the 1950s – 'the welfare state is built on the drudgery of women'. Indeed campaigns to humanise the system, for example the campaign to grant mothers more access to their hospitalised children, while progressive in one sense, actually added to the burdens of women – and the welfare state constructed women overwhelmingly as mothers, perceiving them neither as workers nor as independent adults.

At that period, collectivist state provision was more unproblematically equated with democratic provision than can be the case today. There was little or no understanding of the inequality of power within the family. Equally, the imbalance of power between the consumers of welfare and its providers was never addressed. In practice 'consumers' became 'clients' and from that modulated into 'scroungers' and 'problem families'. Because they were not paying for services, it was too often assumed that they had no right to query them. Individuals might shop around in the private sector of medicine, education or housing; in the public sector you took what you were given, because the experts 'knew best'. This was partly because the idea that we *have* all paid via tax and insurance for 'our' welfare state never really took root.

. . . Tinker, Tailor, Social worker, Health visitor, DHSS supervisor, unemployed, unemployed, unemployed . . .

All too often welfare continued to be equated with charity and handouts; and the growth of supplementary benefit and means-tested benefits contributed to such a view. The long-awaited abolition of the means test never came and today its evil influence is more pervasive than ever. For the means test does produce inferiority and stigma. Its abolition should still be a priority for all who seek radical reform.

Moreover, the paternalistic and managerial ethos of the administration of welfare even in what now seem like the golden years of the affluent society vitiated the benefits of the welfare state. The whole way, for example, in which the tenants of public housing were treated never gave them a sense either of dignity, or of control over their living environment. 'The Council' as landlord was often arbitrary and mean, trying to dictate how you lived your life (one of the biggest demonstrations ever seen in Bethnal Green was against a ban on pets in council housing), evicting you without redress if you fell on hard times, sending you back to a violent husband when you begged for a place of your own.

Doctors and nurses treated you as children and frightened you and told you what to do without ever explaining what they were doing to your body. And the whole system of juvenile and child care legislation, set up after the war in the pious hope of keeping even 'problem families' together and preventing juvenile crime, in practice often imposed 'middle-class' behaviour on working-class people, while too often child care officers were seen as coercive child snatchers.

Some of the Fabians had imagined that social workers would 'humanise' welfare provision, provide a needed advice service and 'bring the goods to the people'. Yet the role of a proliferating army of social workers as it has developed has been a confused and ambiguous one.

As the only group of welfare state professionals that devotes its services almost exclusively to the least privileged and poorest sections of society, social workers have

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too often reinforced conservative attitudes both towards family life and to what Beveridge called 'the pleasure of saving up pennies for a rainy day' – i.e. the good, old-fashioned virtue of thrift.

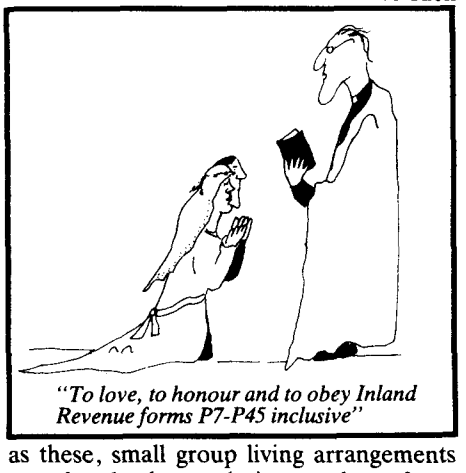
SOME OF THIS has changed during the 1970s. Feminists above all mounted a comprehensive and socialist critique of the welfare state. The call – still unanswered – for an end to the cohabitation ruling; the demand for a woman's right to choose whether to have a child or not – an end to the diktat of doctors; the setting up of women's refuges to give them a means of escape from brutal husbands; all these exposed the inadequacies as well as the bias of existing welfare provision.

Later the left outside the Labour Party began to take up these issues. Yet in the run up to the 1979 General Election Jim Callaghan was still beating the drum of the traditional family. The last Labour government was also pathetically reluctant to implement the child benefit scheme, in case the transfer of a rather small sum from the wage earner's packet to his wife's purse caused a general rebellion within the Labour movement. Only in the past two years has the Labour Party even begun to move from its unthinking support for welfare-as-we-know-it: the social-service state according to God the Beveridge.

Yet today *only 15 per cent* of the population lives at any given moment in a household that conforms to the Beveridge paradigm. Moreover, the vast numbers of unemployed no longer consist of men with paid up national insurance contributions; but of armies of school leavers who have never had jobs, part-time women workers, the long-term unemployed whose insurance is exhausted. At the same time, marriage is less likely to endure for a lifetime. There may be good reasons for this, and it is not necessarily a disaster, but it is always assumed to be a curse, and the Labour Party has played a traditional role in deploring the breakdown of marriage and piously hoping that more welfare and more redistribution will somehow shore the family up. Certainly poverty exacerbates marital conflict and even causes break-ups and the Labour Party is right to forge a programme that attempts the redistribution of income and wealth. But what probably contributes more to marriage breakdown is the continued imbalance of power between men and women within it, and the Labour Party cannot just assume that stable marriage is an absolute good with no attempt to understand its structural problems.

Labour's programme for 1982 certainly goes some way towards a recognition of women's still unequal role in society and to the way in which democratic changes mean that more people now than ever before live alone; that there are more single parent families than ever before (three-quarters of those parents being mothers); that different racial and ethnic groups have different kinds of family; and that the proportion of the elderly – two-thirds of them women – is also growing. Such a recognition resides, for example, in the slogan 'a decent home for every *household*' – rather than 'family'. This is not nit-picking over a word; if we acknowledge that most people at any given time are not living in a 'nuclear family' we shall more readily cater for their diverse needs in different kinds of housing.

The Labour programme, however, still lacks real understanding of the unpaid domestic work on which welfare provision depends. It is right yet insufficient to call for good 'community care'. In practice community care has usually meant unpaid care by women, or else badly paid care by women – home helps and so on. The very word 'community' gestures towards an ideological vision of a close-knit world that often does not exist. Too often 'community care' is just another word for family. There is a need for more small living units for those vulnerable individuals who need precisely to get away from the family, yet for whom total isolation, often the only alternative, is equally horrendous: ex-mental patients, for example, or teenagers who have been abused at home. For such



"To love, to honour and to obey Inland Revenue forms P7-P45 inclusive"

as these, small group living arrangements may be the best solution, at least for a time.

The Labour Party programme is caught in a transition, partly aware of all the changes that have taken place and are taking place in the ways we live, partly trying to restore the status-quo-ante. It won't of course be easy radically to reconstruct the welfare state; and even the current plans *assume* the success of other parts of Labour's programme: the revitalisation of industry and the restoration of jobs.

Yet to make the welfare state more democratic would not necessarily cost money. If the call to 'democratise welfare' is not to remain an empty populist slogan we must consider what it means. Part of the left critique of welfare in the '70s reacted so violently against what it saw as authoritarian centralised state provision that it rushed to the other extreme and approached a facile anti-statism in over-emphasising 'grass-roots alternatives'. Yet for the foreseeable future there will have to be some centralised state provision. It is hard to imagine a grass-roots alternative social security system, for example; and while the NHS may put too much emphasis on technology, we do need heavy capital outlay for hospitals, operating theatres and special equipment which no idealised urban barefoot doctor can replace.

A truly democratic welfare state will have to redress imbalance of power between men and women. This is part of a wider development of a richer understanding of the 'needs' of individuals in all their diversity. To facilitate the articulation of their needs by individuals and groups, in order to try to break down the monolithic assumptions on which welfare provision has hitherto been based, requires effort and organisation rather than vast outlays of money. No public welfare system can wholly reflect the multiplicity of needs in an 'advanced' industrial multi-racial society. But at least more genuine consultative bodies and the incorporation of consumers into planning discussions can help with the articulation of a wider range of needs, so that we are not all clamped like square pegs into the round hole of the untypical Beveridge family.

Democratisation, we will find, is a complicated matter. What would the 'democratisation' of a school mean: more power to the parents; to the teachers; to the children; to the local authority? How are the conflicts of interest of these groups to be reconciled equitably? Or, in the case of battered women: what part should the local neighbourhood play in relation to a refuge; should the women themselves have a final say in all decisions; what if they disagree with the management committee; what happens to the husbands? There exists a whole range of delicate problems underlying almost every aspect of welfare provision and it is important for the Labour Party at least as a first step to provoke much more discussion around these many knotty issues.

I HAVE GIVEN priority to women not out of partisan bias, but because the welfare system does affect women so directly. They are most often the ones who come up against it. It affects them deeply in their role as mothers – by no means always happily. It assumes – still – their economic dependence on a man.

The Labour Party programme has recognised the validity of one of the demands of feminists: for the abolition of the married man's tax allowance and the consequent release of £3 billion. It adopts the Child Poverty Action Group proposal that this money should go towards an increased child benefit. Some feminists argue that it should go towards a larger personal allowance for all taxpayers because women's income, as well as children's, is important. But is any of this enough? Feminists are also demanding a full-scale and far-reaching reorganisation of the tax and social security systems so that all adults receive the allowances from these systems as of right and not according to whether or not they live with someone else in a heterosexual relationship.

On 13-14 November at Caxton House in London the Rights of Women group are holding a conference, 'Beyond Marriage: A Feminist Direction for Social Policy'. The Conference is intended to look positively at alternatives to marriage and at the emotional and practical changes this will require. ROW rejects all models of law and social policy which presume the financial dependence of women and children on male wage earners and argues instead for a new framework of private rights and public obligations which recognise the needs of all individuals to an independent income, and essential services. These needs, ROW argues, can be met only by a collective response rather than by private household arrangements. ▶

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Yet, paradoxically, such policies will not be fought for until women and men have a vision of alternative ways of living together based on equality, independence and caring. So, in arguing for an extension of the welfare state, ROW, like many others, perceives the welfare state as a moral project improving the personal lives of women and making possible new and better forms of sexual relationship.

At a Labour Party Conference held in London last Whitsun, 'Beyond Welfare', there still seemed woefully little understanding of what such demands mean. Indeed Geoff Rooker, supposedly a left-wing 'expert' on welfare matters, went so far as to dismiss 'disaggregation' – the right of all individual adults to claim benefits separately – as 'wages for housework'. This it emphatically is not. Feminists do not want women paid for staying at home simply as 'housewives'. Women, however, who are doing essential work in caring for the dependant and vulnerable (and men doing such work too – would there were more of them) have the right not to lose financially on that account.

The 'postwar settlement' was a vision of society that benefited white males. Theirs was the dominant voice both in the TUC and the Coalition and Labour governments, joint architects of the welfare state. They reinforced two separate worlds; the public world of work, the male world; and the private world of the family, the female world. In a way the welfare state set up, or tried to set up, an intermediate zone. But it was contradictory in calling on a communal and collectivist spirit to reinforce the private world of family and kin. Nor did it break down the class system in the way that was intended. It is time we got away from this bifurcated and class-divided world. Even without the injection of vast resources, a welfare state could be reorganised on the basis of new assumptions about what welfare is and a recognition that many welfares are involved, not just one undifferentiated 'welfare' that suits everybody.

The Labour programme for health and education would do much to break down our class welfare system in which there is – increasingly – private provision for the rich and in which, even in the public sector, the better educated and more articulate get the best deal, while the poor get the worst. What we also need is a new understanding of how inequality between the sexes constructs the assumptions of welfare. The hallmark of an adequate welfare system for the sort of society we are likely to be living in for the forseeable future is always going to be the quality of care we give to those who have no-one to love them, no family, no mother, no daughter. It is *because* we are over-reliant on family care that we treat those without families who cannot care for themselves so shamefully. That is why the welfare state can't just be about equal shares, or just about democracy. It has to be – as Marx knew Communism has to be – about meeting the diverse needs of the unequal: from each according to his (or her) ability – to each according to his (or her) needs. □

Elizabeth Wilson is the author of Women and the Welfare State.

IRELAND

'Murder' in the afternoon

MARY HOLLAND reports on the effect that an army shooting last month is having on Catholic opinion in Ulster

THE KILLING of an unarmed IRA man by the British Army in Derry two weeks ago raises serious problems for Secretary of State James Prior at a time when his plans for a new assembly in Northern Ireland are already under severe threat of a boycott by the Catholic minority.

In the short term, the shooting of 24-year-old Eamonn Bradley, as he left a public house where he had been playing cards, has led to the most sustained and bitter rioting in Derry since the death last April of 11-year-old Stephen McConomy (see *NS* 27 August). The Catholic Bishop, Dr Edward Daly, a forthright critic of the Provisional IRA, has described the killing as 'murder'.

In the long term, the manner of Bradley's death is likely to raise serious questions about whether the British Army now regards itself as legitimately engaged in a shooting war with the IRA in Northern Ireland and, if so, where that will leave the Government's policy of criminalisation, i.e. treating the IRA as common criminals to be dealt with through the normal processes of law – apprehension by the police, trial in the courts and imprisonment. If no-one is charged with killing Bradley, then the provisional IRA will have some powerful evidence to justify their claim that there is a war going on in Northern Ireland and that their prisoners are entitled to prisoner of war status. No one is more conscious of this than the Ulster police force.

The catalogue of civilians who have been killed by British soldiers in the North, and the failure to bring these soldiers to court to answer for their acts, is now one of the main causes of the political alienation that prevails in Catholic areas of Ulster. In most of these cases the authorities have at least been able to point to some element of ambiguity or accident to explain why the soldiers involved have not been charged. The killing of Eamonn Bradley in the Shantallow area of Derry on 25 August allows for no such extenuating ambiguities. Since Bradley's death Bishop Daly has been collecting statements from eye-witnesses to the shooting. What he has heard so far led him to say to the *New Statesman* last week: 'I am convinced that this was cold-blooded murder. I am deeply worried by the number of these incidents because I believe that the failure of the authorities to charge soldiers must increase the risk of more of them occurring. As a by-product we now have a more profound alienation from the security forces in areas like Creggan than I can ever remember.'

According to eye-witnesses the circumstances surrounding Bradley's death were as follows: On 24 August, acting on information from a 'super grass,' the RUC had conducted a massive search and arrest operation in Derry. It was the biggest of its kind since 'Operation Motorman' in 1972, when the security forces moved back into Republican no-go areas, and they had good reason to be pleased with the results. Thirty-four people were arrested, of whom 19 were later charged with crimes ranging from murder to membership of the IRA. A short time before this search, the RUC had called at Bradley's house, but he was not at home. He would have been a natural enough person for them to want to interview. He was known to have been active in the Provisional IRA and had spent four and a half years 'on the blanket' in pursuit of the demand for political status, after being convicted of conspiracy to rob, hijacking and membership of the IRA. He was released from prison last April.

On the afternoon of 25 August, the day after the search operation, the Army surrounded a pub called Shantallow House which Bradley was known to frequent. He decided, with a friend, to leave by a back entrance. They got about 20 yards when the friend was seized by a soldier. There is some confusion about what happened next, but it seems that Bradley was first shot in the leg and then, when he fell, in the head. He died shortly afterwards. All this happened in broad daylight, between 4.30 and 5 p.m.

In the course of the next 24 hours the RUC issued four different press statements. The first claimed that Bradley had been killed after an army patrol had been fired on. During the day this was modified and the fourth statement stressed that no shots had been fired at the army and that no firearms had been found at the scene of the incident.

From the point of view of the hard-pressed Northern Irish police force the incident is a disaster. In recent months they have had some spectacular successes against the Provos, of which the Derry search operation was only one. The weekend following Bradley's shooting saw their single largest haul of explosives. Most of these gains have been made because the police have been getting more information, from within the IRA and from Republican areas. Events like the killing of Bradley seriously undermine these efforts by halting the flow of information and alienating the entire Catholic population. □

NEW STATESMAN INDEX

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TUC

Whites versus blues

PATRICK WINTOUR reports from Brighton on reform of the General Council

TO THE TRADE UNIONIST on the Clapham omnibus, facing unemployment and high fares, the question of whether Mr Morton of the musicians' union or Mr Mills of the Banking, Insurance and Finance Union sits on the TUC General Council must seem a matter of only fleeting interest. And, to an extent, the dear old omnibus is right again.

The General Council operates by a broad consensus and the swing to the right, widely expected under the election system to be implemented next year, may not in fact be that visible. In reality, the old General Council, for all that it was dominated by Transport and General patronage, has not pursued a reckless 'left' strategy of opposition to Thatcherism. Trade union leaders of left and right may be eager to fight the government: mustering the troops is the problem. But in the medium term the importance of a reformed General Council may emerge; if Labour is elected, it will certainly be more receptive to a social contract which is based on an explicit incomes policy.

The left wing on the General Council are currently threatening all manner of reprisals against its victorious opponents. On Wednesday, blue collar unions such as the Transport Workers and the Miners, who stand to lose by the reform, were meeting to discuss the possibility of setting up a separate blue collar TUC in opposition to the white collars. The miners think that the white collar unions will now dominate Congress and turn it into a conservative and powerless body. This desperate remedy of a split is likely to come to nothing, but it shows the extent of the left's dismay.

Yet in truth the left must take much of the blame for its defeat. The need to alter the increasingly anachronistic TUC electoral system has been apparent for 20 years. Motions on the subject have been put to Congress almost every year since 1975. Almost all of them proposed the system that finally triumphed this week – automatic representation on the council for unions with over 100,000 members. Yet since 1975 the left has never suggested any alternative to this proposal. Their chief tactic has been to delay and to kick the issue into touch by promising to examine the General Council structure in the context of a general review of TUC services. In the end time ran out.

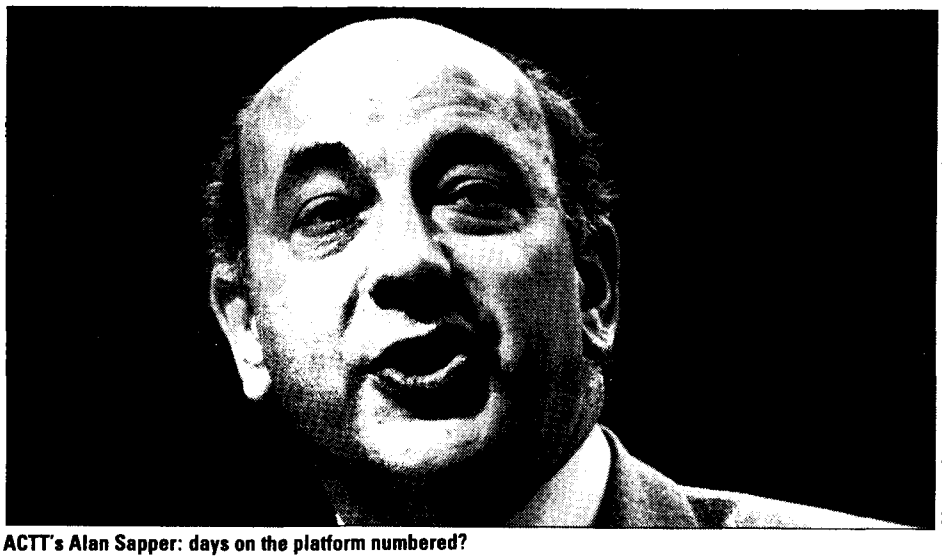
Formal complaints about the system began in 1974, with a letter from the Civil and Public Services Association asking for a review of the General Council structure. This was refused. In 1975 NALGO also asked for a review and was told the issue would be examined as part of an overall look at General Council consultation with unions. In 1977 the Post Office Engineering Union took back a motion calling for automatic representation since the council had, just before congress, produced a consultative document on the issue. Conveniently, the consultation was intended to take until the following year.

In 1978 the General Council came back and flatly opposed any change, arguing that Congress as a whole must elect the Council. Otherwise federalism would spread, it was argued, with individual councillors accountable to no-one but their own union. The General and Municipal nevertheless moved a motion calling for automatic representation, which was defeated by a million votes. In 1979 Roy Grantham of APEX brought the issue forward yet again but did not press it. The General Council were conducting a general review of structure. The next year the General Council returned again opposing alteration. By now the debate had become a fixture like the opening ceremony of Congress and the Mayor's address.

In 1981 the POEU were back again, demanding the principle of automaticity, which they won with the help of left-wing unions NUPE and ASTMS. Throughout 1981, the issue had become highly political. Once the principle of change had been accepted for the first time last year it would have seemed tactically essential, from the left's point of view, that it should prepare a reform of its own, but it did not. It admitted that root and branch change was necessary, but could not say how it was to be done. It was left naked, half defending the indefensible.

The original idea behind election to General Council via a trade group structure – whereby unions in similar industries were placed in 18 trade groups – was that it might encourage industrial unionism through amalgamation of unions within groups. This did not happen. We still have multi-unionism. The mergers that have taken place have been into large general unions. These largely occurred under pressure of insolvency and membership decline. Few mergers followed logical industrial lines. For the smaller merging unions, a general union was more attractive since it offered the prospect of considerable continuing autonomy.

An admission that the trade group structure had failed to produce industrial unionism came in the early 70s, when the TUC set up industry committees bringing together all the unions in an industry, regardless of whether or not they were on the General Council. The trade group structure for electing the General Council, however, remained, producing more and more implausible trade groups – such as the glass, ceramics, chemicals, food, drink, tobacco, brush-making and distribution group. The structure tried to accommodate the growth of post-war public sector and white collar unions.



Network

ACTT's Alan Sapper: days on the platform numbered?

For instance, the T. & G., the civil servants, the Post Office and the public sector trade groups were each granted an extra seat in 1977. But despite such tinkering, the old war horses, the boilermakers (membership 119,585), the Sheet Metal Workers (62,601) and the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (100,175) were each placed in groups that made it easy for them to be elected onto the Council at the expense of growing computer-based unions. There was a distinct inter-war look to the balance of representation.

To an extent, the exigencies of maintaing this balance, accommodating some small unions and containing the Council to a manageable size, inevitably meant the exclusion of some middle-ranking unions. But these unions thought that they were being unfairly excluded by the large unions' patronage. Since all unions can vote in every trade group, the big union block vote is omnipotent. In group 17, the T&G and the unions that follow in its wake, used their power to exclude the banking union and APEX (membership 148,000 and 123,000 respectively) in favour of the musicians union and ACTT (membership 40,000 and 20,000). Similarly the Post Office Engineering Trade Group was extended in 1977 by three seats, but the POEU still found itself excluded by 700,000 votes, since the T&G decided to vote for the Inland Revenue, a union half the POEU's size. The T&G tried to use its patronage reasonably discreetly, but by the end it simply couldn't keep the system going. □

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GOWER BY-ELECTION

Figures in a blasted landscape

MARTYN HARRIS considers the candidates in a constituency noted for 'the fastest growth of long-term unemployment in Wales'

Between thumb and forefinger Hubert Morgan hopefully massages the tarry corpse of an extinct cigar, ferociously smoked to the dimensions of a cold and toxic Toffo.

'Politics in South Wales,' he says carefully, 'has always been Labour and anti-Labour. The antis go by different names but it is always the same people.'

Morgan is running the Labour campaign of Gareth Wardell in the Gower by-election. 10,000 majority in '79 but, as Morgan says, they are all marginal in by-elections.

Wardell is late. Out campaigning in Ystylafera. Questions are running out and the conversation drifts into generalities.

'How well do you know the area?' asks Morgan.

'I haven't lived here for 12 years.'

'I remember 12 years ago this area was *alive*. Industry being *reborn*. And now whole communities being *destroyed*.'

The statements come in threes, climbing escalators of Welsh emphasis to italicised outrage.

I remember 12 years ago as tower blocks sprouting in bombed sites and the parks of the old squirearchy. As builders in sharkskin suits and Rolls-Royces on the never-never, and new casinos opening every month, and wife swapping scandals down the Mumbles, and Labour council leaders going to jail for fraud, and of a comic new Welsh word for a strange new aristocracy – the Taffia.

But Swansea, and the industrial hinterland of north Gower, has changed and Morgan catalogues the disasters: 6,000 jobs gone at BSC Port Talbot; 600 at Velindre tinplate; two collieries left from 17; 16.3 per cent on the dole and the fastest growth of long-term unemployment in Wales. It goes on and on.

Still no Wardell though, and silence hangs heavy with the smoke in the Labour offices. 'Shall I put you down as constituency agent?' Morgan is mildly miffed. 'I am Secretary of the Labour Party in Wales', he says with dignity. Of course he is. Knew it all along. Just testing.

So phone numbers are exchanged and promises and it is back among the rain-soaked stone terraces of Gorseinon. Labour heartland. Held by the party for 50 years, the last 20 of those by the late Ifor Davies, a respected, chapel-going pillar of the community, the size of whose personal vote is now the subject of much disrespectful conjecture.

SINCE THE LIBERAL decline of the '30s there has been little serious opposition to Labour in the Welsh valleys. The wandering allegiances of the middle class have had little influence because there is hardly such a thing as a middle class. In South Wales you are either poor, or you become a teacher, or you move to England.

Labour candidate Gareth Wardell is a teacher at Carmarthen training college. SDP man Gwynoro Jones is an educational administrator. While the Tory, Trefor Llewellyn, who is neither poor nor a teacher, works as an accountant for a computer firm in Hampshire.

But they are all out on distant doorsteps this wet and windy Saturday and the only man at home is Len Thomas, most famous school caretaker in Wales. Everyone in Gowerton knows where he lives.

'He locked out Norman Tebbit from a Conservative meeting at the school.'

'*And* he ordered the Tories out of the hall when they wouldn't let demonstrators in'.

'*And* he turned out the lights when they refused to leave.'

Thomas is cheerfully unrepentant about his hour of glory. 'I'd do it again any time', he says. 'That Tebbitt have a skin like a crocodile. Know what he said when one of them nurses waved a payslip at him? "Hope you've paid tax", he said. That don't get onto News At Ten.'

> . . . there is hardly such a thing as a middle class. In South Wales you are either poor, or you become a teacher, or you move to England.

He is branch secretary of NUPE and a member of the Labour Party. He is also, with delightful Welsh pragmatism, a member of the Conservative Club where the beer is cheaper. Heartland.

The poor men in the election are easier to track down. The Civil Rights candidate, computer programmer David Burns, 24, resides in Cardiff jail, remanded on explosives charges. The Home Office says there are no special facilities for journalists to visit Mr Burns.

Almost as poor is Chris Farnsworth, leader of the Computer Democrats, which is fielding John Donovan, a former Plaid Cymru councillor. Mr Farnsworth lives on the dole and income from a 'failed health-food shop' in Pontardulais. He believes Parliament should be replaced by referenda on home computers. 'I know nothing about computers', he says brightly. 'The idea came from the Bible'. His only policy is to tell the people the truth which is, he believes, 90 per cent unemployment by the year 2,000.

'Where did the money for the deposit come from?' I ask cautiously. No hesitation.

'From the Chinese embassy.'

Heartland?

When the three main candidates finally turn up on Sunday morning they are a lot less interesting. Tory Trefor Llewellyn is the only non-Welsh speaker of the three, in a constituency where 47 per cent use the language. 'Can't pronounce his own name', says Gareth Wardell contemptuously, producing a passable Jan Leeming impersonation that rhymes his rival with Clever Lou-Ellen. Nothing annoys the Welsh like news readers who pronounce Zimbabwe better than Llanelly.

A fairly moist Conservative, Llewellyn has issued a policy document on unemployment that uses the word 'compassion' no less than three times and promises to 'build on our successes' with more cash for expansion all round. Wet enough to have some blood in his veins and with blue-jowled good looks, stunning wife and charming baby daughter he should go far, but not in Gower. Not this election. Not this government.

The most professional politician, and correspondingly the least likeable of the three is Jones SDP, or Gwynoro as he likes to call himself. Former Labour MP for Carmarthen and Parliamentary Private Secretary to Roy Jenkins, he can rattle off precise lists of local issues and is the best known name among the electors. His particular cross is an untimely defection to the SDP only three weeks after losing the Labour nomination for Gower.

Leading the Harlech TV opinion poll with 47 per cent of the committed vote is Gareth Wardell who has a wonderful Neil Kinnock accent and a way with the words. 'Militant Tendency is a product of Thatcherism', he says. 'Dogmatism of the right creates dogmatism of the left and I have no time for either'. Wardell is pro-unilateral disarmament, anti-Common Market, anti-Militant and pro-pay policy. When he gets to the Commons, as he surely must, he will not know which gang to join.

As the Paddington train pulls up the Swansea Valley on Sunday night, loaded with the non-poor and non-teachers there still seems to be a hole in the middle of the election. The trouble with these three guys is that they all agree with each other. Not on the national issues, but on local ones like restoration of development area status, increased public investment, new industries – yes. They are all the same. Perhaps I should have asked their favourite colours.

In the past the desperation of industrial Wales found comfort in millenialist preachers and later in the messianic promises of primitive socialism. Can it now find comfort in these three nice young men, carefully manoeuvring over the barren middle ground of social meliorism? In the blasted landscape of the Lower Swansea Valley, the demand of eccentric Chris Farnsworth takes a small step towards plausibility. 'They should tell people the truth', he says, and perhaps they should.

And like question marks over the truth the giant disused dock cranes glide past the carriage window with the gutted warehouses, the filled canals and stagnant craters of a commercial Passchendaele. The worst industrial desert in Europe. Heartland. □

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ECONOMICS

Towards a socialist system of planning

In the second of two extracts from his book *Production Purpose and Structure* (published this week by Frances Pinter) JEREMY BRAY looks at ways in which incomes policy and planning could improve economic performance

THREE PARTICULAR areas of economic policy – exchange rates, incomes, and micro-to-macro planning – seem to me the areas most important to the success of a socialist government in a medium-sized industrial country today, and therefore the most relevant tests of the applicability and success of a socialist theory of production in a country such as Britain.

(I discussed exchange rates in the current context in the *New Statesman* on 16 July.)

For some years I have been asking wage negotiators on both sides, from shop stewards to trade union general secretaries, and from personnel officers to directors of employers associations, what they find the most important consideration for trade unionists when it comes finally to negotiation across the table: prices – how much they have moved since the last negotiation; profits – how much can be afforded; or relativities – how much they are getting across the road. By far the most common response is relativities. It depends of course on the circumstances: prices and profits do matter, but relativities seem to matter most in the end.

It is widely argued that the costs of nationally imposed wage norms are high, in rigidity and in the distortion of relativities. Experience in the 1970s has left the trade unions and the Labour Party opposed to incomes policies. At the same time experience of the 1980s has convinced everyone of the high cost in unemployment and lost output of basing anti-inflationary policies on monetary policy alone. As a result there have been developments in collective bargaining, possibly of long-term significance.

Frustrated by the experience of standing alone, some public sector unions have sought to present a combined front to government, despite the failure of industrial action by the combined civil service unions in 1981. In 1980 the firemen settled for a deal which will keep them at the top quartile (i.e. just in the top 25 per cent) of male manual workers in future years. In Ford and other large combines, the trade unions have learned the effectiveness of joint union negotiation. And at the 1981 Labour Party conference, when Mr Arthur Scargill took pride in the industrial action taken by miners in support of the nurses' wage claim some years ago, he was not seeking to weaken the miners' bargaining position.

It would be claiming too much to argue that a tendency is developing for unions first to reach understanding about relativities, and then to combine to turn this into a wage increase, but it is worth looking more closely at what has happened to relativities.

The positions of particular industries have not deviated far from their own average relativity over the period 1971-81. Occasionally, like the miners with the oil price increase in 1974, a group breaks through with some fundamental change in bargaining strength. But in most cases industries stay within 2 to 3 per cent of their average relativity. Yet over this period the average annual increase in money earnings was 16 per cent, and the total increase over the whole period was 327 per cent. By comparison the variations in relativity are tiny, yet it is these variations which are credited with being the main factor in collective bargaining. That is consistent, since if they are so important they will be tightly controlled.

The approach to a socialist theory of production which has been outlined suggests looking at the objectives of wage earners and their unions. Wage earners are certainly seeking two or more objectives. One is to maximise their own earnings, and the balance of these drives maintains relativities. But other objectives, which are significant, are to protect real earnings, to avoid redundancies and unemployment, and to reduce inflation. The theory then suggests that it would be reasonable to look for the spontaneous development of new structures or patterns of collective bargaining. While these can be offered a framework, again the theory suggests the new structure will only develop if the framework matches spontaneous tendencies on the part of wage negotiators, as they seek to achieve their multiple objectives.

Any development in collective bargaining on these lines will evolve over time between the unions, employers and the government. But it may be worth outlining some of the influences on such a development. First, the purpose is to allow relativities to adjust – or be maintained – without thereby adding to inflationary pressures. We can think of the present structure of relativities as a rather rigid steel structure, linking groups of employees. If the position of one group is moved up, the whole structure moves up almost as much. As the position of lots of groups changes for different reasons, often by small amounts, the movement of the whole structure is near the total or sum of the separate individual movements. So the overall inflationary effect is far greater than any one adjustment of relativities. This argues for allowing the relativities to adjust first, and then positioning the whole structure.

So there could be a preliminary annual round of negotiations in the autumn on relativities. These negotiations on relativity whether in multi-plant or single-plant firms, or in Wages Councils or other industry-wide groups, would take into account the full range of considerations traditional in collective bargaining. But they would not have to take into account inflation. That would be the major but still not the only consideration in the final round which would follow between groups of unions or the TUC, employers and the government. In this final round the already agreed relativities would be translated into

Montage: Michael Bennett

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cash terms, by agreeing nationally on the 'base' (the overall average per cent increase), to which the already agreed relativities would apply. If, for example, the overall average percentage increase was 7 per cent, a group which kept the same relativity would get 7 per cent, but a group whose relativeity improved from 88 to 90, would get roughly 9 per cent, or (107 × 90/88) − 100 = 9.43 per cent. Each negotiating group would then ratify its final cash increase, or reject it and seek further negotiation, with industrial action if they wished.

Negotiating groups which accepted their final cash figure unchanged would implement their agreements from, say, 1 January, and be given a form of government guarantee. If the base – average national earnings – turned out more than, say, 2 per cent higher than had been anticipated in the final agreement with the TUC and employers, government would make cash payments to employees to prevent their actual relativities falling more than 2 per cent below the levels to which they had agreed. It would be indexing, not relative to prices but to earnings, with supplements paid not by employers but by the government, and about an annually renegotiated base. The process could develop by the clustering of unions or negotiating groups, sorting out their position among themselves to strengthen their bargaining position. The clusters might eventually be brought together by the TUC in so far as they thought that would further strengthen their position.

INSTITUTIONS for linking company and national plans need to be built on concepts of what those institutions will actually do. The resources and techniques are now available to create a more efficient system of industrial planning than any previously possible either in market economies or in centrally planned economies. The flow of information and the consideration of alternatives, assumed in classical economics but never achieved in practice, can now more nearly be created, and a wide distribution of autonomous decision making reconciled with the development of higher level strategies. These make possible levels of achievement of objectives and balances of conflicting interests more satisfactory than are attainable by unaided market systems. To see what needs to be done we must first review the problems that enterprises face, the ways they plan and make decisions today, and the developments in planning methods already taking place.

A plan is a course of action proposed in the light of a particular set of expectations. A strategy is a proposal as to how planned actions should respond when expectations change. 'I shall go for a walk' is a plan. 'I shall go for a walk if it looks fine' is a strategy. Since expectations are bound to change, strategies are more robust.

The task in macro or national planning is not to collect all the information about enterprise plans and strategies into the centre and attempt to do the job of company management centrally. It is rather to inform the government and the enterprise of each other's position and strategy, so that they may be taken into account in the improvement of decisions in both the government and the company.

The most practical way of achieving this flow of information on performance and strategy is for government and the enterprise to make available to each other comprehensive models of their present and expected future activities, with particular forecasts (budgets, plans) and the assumptions, both micro and macro, on which they are based.

A company model will show how employment may be expected to respond

Montage: Michael Bennett

to a change in wages, investment to a change in profits, sales to a change in the exchange rate and so on. There is just no other way of representing in communicable form the factors that have to be considered in company planning. The company model embodies the macro environment of product markets, household incomes, and labour markets, with the activity of the enterprise in respect of sales, production, exports, imports, purchases, inventories, employment, wages, profits, and investment in fixed assets and in innovation. Forecasts and assumptions from the Treasury model about the macro environment are already available to enterprises for use in enterprise models. The one-year budget and the five-year plan of an enterprise can be presented as forecasts from the enterprise model for one particular set of assumptions about the macro environment and enterprise policies. But the model makes it possible to explore and to specify the response to different macro environments and enterprise policies.

The way in which the model of a particular enterprise is used will depend on the enterprise and the particular application. In some cases the model will derive all its inputs from a national economy model, the policy response of the enterprise to the macro environment in its own situation will be fully defined, and the model will produce forecasts. In other cases, particularly with smaller firms in highly competitive industries, the order intake will depend little on macro variables and will be quite unpredictable. But given the order intake, the dynamics of response and the resources required may be well defined by the smaller enterprise model. In this case the aggregate order intake for the industry may be forecast with the help of national economy models, and its aggregate response shown from representative smaller firm models.

Such models cannot be more than an approximate representation of the cost structure, dynamic response, and proposed strategies of an enterprise, but they do not need to be. The impact of major decisions, for example on new capacity or closures, not being part of normal company planning routines, could be represented by appropriate additions to or subtractions from model forecasts. Neither the model nor solutions for it for particular assumptions would constitute a commitment on the part of the enterprise. But they would provide information useful in making contracts and commitments.

To take advantage of available technology and to minimise bureaucracy, companies could be required to mount their models in standard software on a particular make of micro-computer and left connected to a telephone line overnight, so that an automatic multiplexer connected to the Treasury model, by ringing up and exchanging passwords, could obtain any required solutions. The company model programme could be adopted from any of a wide range of modelling packages now on the market.

The aim of a planning agreement must be for the government to help firms, with the support of their employees and if need be financial support from the government, to move from the circumstances of decline to the circumstances of growth, and for growing firms further to strengthen and to use the strength of their position for further growth. There are examples of firms which even in the early '80s were able to achieve remarkable transformations of performance. The need is for many more such. Planning agrements should not be a rigid framework for mutual exploitation by ivory tower ministers, mendicant firms, and fossilised trade unionists. As such they would quickly and deservedly fail. They should rather be a means of liberation from past constraints of attitudes and resources, so that firms can more successfully achieve their objectives.

The relationship of such an approach to a socialist theory of production on the lines we have discussed are clear. There is no assumption that enterprises are guided by the simple goals of profit maximisation. It is assumed that they have multiple goals, including obligations to employees and the communities in which they operate. The pursuit of these goals requires interaction with government which creates a new level of organisation evolving out of the needs and tendencies of the enterprises themselves.

In concluding the discussion of these areas of policy, it should be evident that they are not merely demonstrations of an abstract theory, but elements in a coherent economic strategy for a Labour government. □

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Nothing for everyone

CLAUDIA WRIGHT analyses the motives that lie behind the Reagan initiative and Arab reactions

'WE MUST DEMONSTRATE that it pays to be an American friend', Richard Burt, an Assistant Secretary of State, said early in the Reagan Administration. In the Middle East this means that the Arabs must pay the US for protection from harm, or they will suffer it from Israel.

Ambassador Habib, the President's Middle East negotiator, was able to achieve a success of dispersing the PLO's forces, because the alternative was the physical annihilation of West Beirut by the Israelis. This still left the Reagan Administration with the problem of removing the Syrian forces and remnants of the PLO and other Arab units in the Bekaa Valley and northern Lebanon. No one in Washington expected this to be as easy to accomplish as the Beirut evacuation, largely because the Americans could not afford to let the Israeli army pummel the Syrians before President Assad would get down to terms. That risked Soviet intervention and superpower confrontation which Washington does not want.

But Habib's negotiating problem with the Syrians was – and remains – that he cannot offer Damascus any positive inducement to withdrawal either. Assad wants an agreement on disengagement of forces in the Bekaa, but once he accepts that, he will give up what little bargaining power there is left for him to negotiate for the return of the Golan Heights. Change in the status of that territory, formally annexed by Israel last December, is not on any American negotiating agenda.

The Administration reasoned that the only way to make progress with the Syrians in Lebanon was to increase *Arab* pressure on Assad. The idea – pushed hard by ex-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger – was to reopen talks on the Palestine issue with an offer on the West Bank and Gaza that would appeal to the Saudis, Syria's principal bankers, the Jordanians, elements of the PLO, and the West Bank Palestinians. If a Palestinian settlement looked possible, the Americans calculated, then Syria would be forced into the negotiations on Lebanon as well.

When originally accepted by the President on 14 August, the American negotiating plan depended for its effectiveness on intense Israeli pressure. Threats of annexation and expulsion of the Palestinian Arabs from the West Bank, and of Israeli moves to subvert King Hussein in Jordan, were essential to get the Arabs to negotiate.

But as Secretary of State George Shultz told a closed-door meeting of Senators on 17 August, the Administration was not planning a high-visibility initiative. He wanted to be reassuring, he said, that there would be no surprises for the Senate or for Israel. The President wanted to avoid making a major public speech – one of the recommendations of the Near Eastern Bureau of the State Department – or appointing a new Middle East negotiator, because, Schultz explained, they would only increase public pressure for results, and heighten tensions in Israel and among Israel's supporters in Congress. The last thing the Administration wanted was what one official, referring to the controversial sale of surveillance aircraft to Saudi Arabia last year, described as 'another AWACS issue'.

Schultz told the Senate that the Administration intended to ignore the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), and to undermine whatever international gains its leader Yasser Arafat had made in Beirut. The US would never permit a Palestinian state to emerge on the West Bank, but he said that some combination of Israeli troop withdrawals, Israeli security zones, demilitarised zones of mixed Jewish and Arab population, and association of Palestinian Arabs with Jordan, could be a compromise acceptable to all. Jordan was chosen as the beneficiary of the West Bank negotiations because the Administration judged that King Hussein was highly vulnerable to US pressure, because he had the credibility to become the 'legitimate representative' of the Palestinian Arabs in the Israeli-held territories, and because Israel itself had expressed some willingness to make a deal with the King.

THERE WERE TWO catches in this plan. One was that it had to be vague enough to appear to promise more to the Arabs – at least Palestinian self-determination and statehood. The other catch was that the plan had to be precise and limited enough to preserve Israel's support – no self-determination, no statehood. The Administration wanted no conflict with Israel, but it also knew that without noisy objections from Jerusalem, nothing it promised the Arabs would appear credible and thus encourage the Arab League summit to allow King Hussein to enter negotiations. Though Schultz publicly rejected Palestinian statehood in a television interview on 22 August, and Defense Secretary Weinberger did the same on television the next day, their vagueness and the combination of Israeli suspicions and Palestinian hopes led to a round of letters and consultations launched by the State Department in the last week of August.

Once again the Arabs were told that if they did not accept an American initiative, Washington could not stop formal annexation of the West Bank and Gaza, or prevent a mass expulsion of the Palestinians into Jordan. The Jordanians, Egyptians and Saudis replied with a request for a clear American initiative. The Administration promised a Presidential statement sometime in September.

In his 31 August letter to Prime Minister Begin, President Reagan restated traditional American positions, several in terms identical to those offered by Begin himself in an American press interview on 28 August. There was no mention of sovereignty – Israeli or Jordanian – in the Reagan letter, but the Israelis decided to put the issue to a test by going public. That forced the White House to schedule the President's statement much earlier than they had originally wanted.

The text – worked on by Howard Teicher, the only member of the National Security Staff ever to have graduated in Hebrew from an Israeli kibbutz – produced a backdown from the 31 August letter on several points. In earlier State Department drafts, Reagan was to have cautioned against setting up the 'village league' authority with which Israel is replacing the elected Palestinian mayors and municipal councils in the occupied territory. That advice was dropped. So too was mention of voting rights for an autonomous authority for the Arabs of East Jerusalem, a point at odds with the Israeli annexation of the Arab half of the city.

In his letter, Reagan defined the American view of 'full autonomy' as covering people, land, and resources, including water. The Begin government defines autonomy to cover only people, not land, and it has already taken legal control of the West Bank's water supply. In his speech, the day after the letter was published, the President conceded this point by omitting any mention of land or water. Finally, Reagan added a paragraph after the text had been distributed to the press. This spoke reassuringly about Israel's final borders in terms indicating his rejection of any idea of a withdrawal to the 1967 lines.

Few senior State Department officials expected before the Reagan speech that there could be any significant movement on the Palestine issue soon, and they will probably be right. The White House calculated, however, that if it could not keep the issue quiet (and was forced into a public zig-zag of offers, denials, clarifications, and concessions on all sides), it would risk satisfying no-one and appear once again to be Begin's lackey.

For the immediate future, Israel's rejection of the Reagan initiative and the challenge of yet more new Israeli settlements on the West Bank will be good domestic politics for everybody. The White House can posture as independent of Israel while evading a decision on sanctions against Israel, as it has in the past. The Begin government could seize the opportunity for early elections, and win a majority of seats in the Knesset – a first-ever majority government in Israel's history, according to the poll projections. The Arab states and the PLO can claim that they are slowly swinging Washington from its pro-Israeli alignment, vindicating the PLO's stand in Beirut. Finally, President Assad of Syria, the last Arab who can cause either Israel or the United States serious trouble in the Middle East, can reject the plan as a sellout with nothing in it for the Palestinians, the PLO or himself. He and Yasser Arafat will be able to resume speaking to one another, and rally the Palestinian factions to Syria's side. Between now and the uncertain future there is time – and that too is what the Reagan initiative gives everybody. □

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MOZAMBIQUE

South Africa threatens

JOSEPH HANLON reports on growing fears in Maputo

FEAR IS GROWING in Mozambique that Maputo could be the next Beirut. Both South Africa and Mozambique have been making pointed references to the Lebanon.

Speaking to the Frelimo Central Committee, President Samora Machel stressed that South Africa is 'one of the principal allies of Israel' and that lessons must be read from what has happened in Lebanon. He noted that as the first step Israel supported a 'puppet' group in Lebanon – the Falangist militia – just as South Africa has supported Unita in Angola and the 'Mozambique National Resistance' (MNR). Then Israel moved into southern Lebanon to protect the Falangists and to attack the PLO, just as South Africa invaded southern Angola to help Unita and attack Swapo.

Next Israel said it could not allow the presence of sophisticated Syrian weapons in Lebanon. Speaking to the Nationlist Party Congress in mid-August, the South African defence minister, Magnus Mallan, said that Pretoria could not permit 'sophisticated weapons' in Mozambique.

Finally, Israel launched its full-scale invasion. 'Faced with the passivity of the UN Security Council and other international bodies, Israel continued until it had destroyed and conquered the Lebanese capital,' President Machel said.

The West's repeated refusals even to maintain the weak existing UN sanctions against South Africa strengthen the parallel. And the Soviet Union's unwillingness to confront the United States over the invasion of Lebanon is causing Frelimo some worry, as the USSR is Mozambique's main military backer. Mozambique has recently had military talks with countries as diverse as Brazil and Libya, and recently signed its first military agreement with a Nato country – Portugal.

The parallels with Lebanon cause special worry here because of the unexpectedly rapid escalation of South African destabilisation activity, seemingly with the approval of Washington. After independence in Zimbabwe, Mozambique naively believed that if it did not allow the African National Congress actual bases, then South Africa would keep its hands off. In fact, South Africa took over sponsorship of the MNR from Rhodesian intelligence (which created it in 1976) and vastly expanded it. MNR activity has made large parts of three provinces unsafe and effectively cut the country in half.

By May, however, the Mozambican army seemed to have stopped the spread of the MNR. So South Africa moved on other fronts. There are more frequent overflights near Maputo and along the border, and much heavier attacks on installations near the South African border. Finally in August, South Africa dropped the mask of the MNR and acted directly. Ruth First was killed by a letter bomb, and South African commandos staged at least two incursions in the border area, 50 kilometres west of Maputo. In one, the commandos went directly to the house of a Portuguese aid worker, and shot him dead as he opened the door.

South Africa is by far the most sophisticated military power in the region. It would be hard to see Mozambique or the ANC militarily as more than a pinprick in the side of apartheid. The 'sophisticated weapon' that threatens South Africa is that Mozambique represents a viable, non-racial alternative to apartheid, Machel said. 'We are attacked because we are independent and are building socialism.'

Just a few months ago, talk of an invasion would have been considered ridiculous. Now people nervously point out that Maputo is only 60 kilometres from the South African border, exactly the same distance as Beirut is from the Israeli frontier. If South Africa invaded to destroy Mozambique's 'sophisticated weapons', would anyone come to its aid? □

SWEDEN

Peace man deported

DUNCAN CAMPBELL reviews a 'witch-hunt' against a researcher

A YEAR-LONG Swedish security case came to an undignified end last week when Owen Wilkes, a researcher at the renowned Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sipri), arrived in New Zealand after being deported.

Wilkes was arrested last August after a holiday trip, cycling with a friend in Gotland and Oland, popular tourist islands in the Baltic. He had taken a few incidental notes of radio masts he had passed on the tour, as one of his research interests was the effectiveness and the relative defensive and offensive capacities of Swedish and NATO countries' radar systems. Although the islands, like all other military establishments in the Baltic, are subjected to reconnaissance flights by aircraft of at least six different nationalities, Wilkes's possession of the notes was initially held to be evidence of an espionage operation. The notes extended to five pages and contained 363 words describing what he had seen from public roads.

After three days, the Swedish security police substituted instead an accusation that Wilkes's note-taking had been 'gross unauthorised handling of secret information'. During a series of trials which concluded in June, the prosecutors attempted to maintain complete secrecy about the various subjects of Wilkes's notes, in order to bolster their case that the installations concerned were secret. Large parts of three successive trials were held *in camera*, while the deputy chief of the Swedish defence staff, Admiral Schuback, alleged to the court that a foreign power would be able to use the information jotted down by Wilkes in order to attack Sweden. Eventually, many of the Swedish newspapers came to attack the affair as an unnecessary 'witch-hunt'.

Nevertheless, after a first trial in a lower court, Wilkes was found guilty of handling secret information and sentenced to six months in jail, followed by deportation. The jail sentence was suspended for appeals, and later dropped. During the trial it emerged that the Säpo (security police) had been tapping telephones and conducting other surveillance against Wilkes and Sipri. The weekend before he was arrested, Säpo officials had secretly broken into Sipri's Stockholm offices and taken some 17 documents. After he was arrested, they had covered their traces by again searching Wilkes's office at Sipri with a legal warrant, and removed folders of information about the defences of other Scandinavian countries.

Why the investigation was started at all is a mystery. It may have been a deliberate attempt to undermine Sipri's reputation and standing in the country – it was set up and has been financed since 1966 by the Swedish government, to commemorate 200 years of peace. Its *Yearbooks on World Armaments and Disarmament* are virtually the only authoritative and unpartisan sources of international information on defence, which are not tainted by serving the interests of a particular defence ministry, alliance, or national interest. Owen Wilkes's major work at Sipri was a three year study of all military bases on foreign territory around the world – such as US overseas bases and Soviet bases in Eastern Europe and elsewhere. The Wilkes report on *Foreign Military Presence* will now be published by Sipri next year – although initially the institute and its staff recoiled from the 'spy' issue instead of defending Wilkes and its own independence.

Before the final court hearing, Swedish peace groups supporting Wilkes organised a mass cycling tour of the Baltic islands late in May, during which, and under police surveillance, they took numerous photographs and made extensive notes of all the installations Wilkes had observed. The police took no action because, they said, no law had been broken.

In the final hearing, Wilkes's lawyers repeated their earlier demonstrations that the information concerned in the case was available to any visitor to the islands, and in addition in publications like *Jane's Weapons Systems* (an annual) or the Swedes' own *Air Force News*. Nevertheless, the conviction was upheld, although the sentence of imprisonment was dropped and the deportation limited to a ten-year period. The Swedish authorities have therefore been somewhat embarrassed by a nomination of Wilkes for the Nobel Peace Prize by New Zealand academics. Sipri itself has also been selected to receive the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education, which will be awarded in Paris in two weeks' time. □

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AID

Turning off the tap

MELVYN WESTLAKE reports from the World Bank meeting in Toronto

THE BIGGEST PROVIDER of effectively free loans to the world's most desperately poor nations – the International Development Association – is now in a terminal condition. It has become a casualty of right-wing ideology and President Reagan's Beverly Hills economics.

Although desperate attempts have been made to revive the IDA by finance ministers attending the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank in Toronto this week, there is now little hope of success. The World Bank's so-called 'soft' arm, which for 22 years has been making 50-year loans at less than 1 per cent interest, will now slowly fade away. The best that can be expected is that it might be resurrected in a new, harder-nosed form.

IDA has always had many enemies in the United States, even though the backing of President Eisenhower was crucial to its establishment in 1960. In the more mean-minded America of President Reagan, IDA is almost friendless. It is presumed that its cheap loans are a 'misallocation' of resources. And, along with the other international development institutions, the IDA also stands accused of financing socialism. It is, its detractors say, helping to foster a world which is hostile to the interests of the United States.

Particularly irritating to many on the right is the high proportion – some 40 per cent – of IDA money that goes to India. US antipathy towards India goes back to the 1950s and Jawaharlal Nehru's strong support for the non-aligned movement. Such sins have been compounded by Mrs Gandhi's refusal publicly to criticise the USSR's involvement in Afghanistan.

Many of the criticisms made by the American right against the international development institutions were effectively rebutted earlier this year in a study undertaken in the US Treasury. This argued that the development institutions had, in fact, 'contributed significantly' to the achievement of US long and medium term political and strategic interests . . .

At the crudest level, this US Treasury study seemed to confirm the worst suspicions of American motives for giving aid. It was, however, clearly written for the consumption of administration hawks in Washington. The more subtle interpretation is that the study was an attempt to maintain the share of multilateral – as opposed to direct bilateral – aid within a declining overall US aid budget. There have been powerful voices in the administration calling for a larger proportion of aid to be given on a bilateral basis.

The Treasury paper has not, however, dissuaded Reagan from cutting financial contributions. And these have been cut stilll further by Congress. IDA has to be replenished every three years by the richer nations and President Carter pledged the US to provide 27 per cent of the $12 billion agreed under its sixth replenishment. That would amount to roughly $1.1 billion in each of the three years 1981-93. In fact, the US has paid little more than half its share. America now says it will spin its contributions out over four years.

Other rich countries have become exasperated by US behaviour. Some, particularly France and Canada, are now pushing for a separate, parallel fund into which they would pay some of the money that should go to IDA. This separate fund would exclude the US, and link loans to the purchase of goods in the home markets of the donor countries.

Any agreement on a seventh replenishment is unlikely to come into effect before 1985 and some stop-gap arrangement will be required. Other industrial nations will be called upon to make some supplementary payments and are anxious to prevent the US getting any benefit from them. In order to maintain the real value of IDA lending, the next replenishment would have to amount to at least $14 billion. Such a sum seems unlikely to be forthcoming. If the US insists on cutting its share, as now seems likely, other rich countries may do the same. IDA will then only survive by becoming a rather different kind of lender. It will be obliged to start making shorter loans at higher rates of interest. □

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SOVIET UNION

A new left in Russia

BOHDAN NAHAYLO reports on KGB efforts to stamp out a new kind of dissidence

EARLIER this year, as part of their long-standing offensive against all forms of dissent, the Soviet authorities struck at dissident leftist activity. The main targets were a newly discovered underground socialist group, a number of unofficial journals and the remnants of an independent trade union.

At the end of the 1970s it appeared that the authorities had successfully contained this singularly embarrassing strain of dissidence. By 1978 they had stopped its best-known representative, Roy Medvedev from publishing his *samizdat* almanac *Twentieth Century*. At about the same time the Marxist historian became increasingly isolated from other dissenters, including some of his closest colleagues, after he was considered to have broken ranks by sternly criticising a number of prominent human rights campaigners.

In October of the same year the KGB rounded up the leaders of a 'new left' group in Leningrad. Referring to themselves as a 'left opposition', they had begun a discussion journal, *Perspectives*, and were apparently planning to hold a conference with similar groups from other cities. Despite a demonstration against the arrests by 200 students, one of the leading activists, Arkady Tsurkov, was convicted of 'anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda' and sentenced to a total of seven years' imprisonment and internal exile, while another, Alexander Skobov, was committed to a psychiatric hospital. In October 1979, also in Leningrad, three anarcho-communists calling themselves 'Revolutionary Communards' were likewise given short shrift by the authorities who preferred to imprison them ostensibly for 'hooliganism' rather than for political offences.

KGB suspicions that their worries with the recalcitrant left were far from over were confirmed this spring by the publication of a remarkable interview in the March-April issue of the French leftist journal *L'Alternative* with the editor of the underground journal *Variants*. The introduction revealed that *Variants* had been appearing in Moscow since 1977 'through cooperative efforts of groups and individuals of social-democratic, socialist and "Euro-Communist" orientation'.

The KGB soon fortuitously obtained a crucial lead in tracking down the authors of the public statement designed for international attention. A certain Igor Pimenko, while undergoing psychiatric treatment, is reported to have told a doctor about the existence of a clandestine 'organisation' with which he was linked and gave away several names. On 6 April arrests and widespread searches took place in Moscow. Six men were arrested including Roy Medvedev's former secretary, Boris Kagarlitsky. All have been charged with 'anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda' which carries a maximum penalty of 12 years' imprisonment and internal exile. During the searches the authorities discovered large amounts of *samizdat*, including replies to the *L'Alternative* interview, an 'Appeal to Polish Workers' signed 'Soviet dissenters', an appeal to the Italian Community Party, and two new unofficial journals, *Socialism and the Future* (six issues) and *Left Turn* (one issue).

Amnesty International

Arkady Tsurkov: 'agitator'

If the amount of allegedly anti-Soviet material confiscated was disconcerting enough for the authorities, the identities of those incriminated was more alarming. The dissident socialists on this occasion were mainly well-educated professionals, some of whom held important and influential positions or whose parents had done so. Of those arrested, Pavel Kudyukin, 29, was a graduate student of the Institute of World Economics and International Relations of the USSR Academy of Sciences specialising in Spanish left-wing parties; Andrei Fadin, 28, a historian specialising in modern Latin American history and whose father was one of the Communist Party Central Committee's experts on Scandinavian countries; Yuri Khavin, 33, a senior automatic systems engineer at a research institute; Vladimir Chernetsky, 32, a scientific researcher at the USSR Academy of Sciences Institute of Chemical Physics; Mikhail Rivkin, 28, a petroleum engineer; and Boris Kagarlitsky, a graduate from the State Institute of Theatrical Art and son of a well-known literary critic. Others implicated included an agitprop instructor, a contributor to the journal *Latin America* and a specialist in Japanese.

So far it is not known what the name of the clandestine socialist 'organisation' was, nor what its precise goals were. Nevertheless, given the evident scale of its activities and the calibre of its members, this body is probably the most important underground leftist group since the 'Union of Communards' or 'Kolokol' group was broken up in the mid-Sixties.

This summer the KGB also attempted to crush once and all for all the free trade union SMOT or Free Interprofessional Union of Workers. Set up in October 1978 as a successor to Vladimir Klebanov's short-lived Association of Free Trade Unions of Workers in the Soviet Union (AFTU), SMOT has continued its precarious existence, mainly underground, for almost three years and kept alight the flame of independent trade unionism in the USSR. In June four more of its activists were arrested: Vladimir Gershuni, a long-standing dissenter and former victim of political abuses of psychiatry, Vladimir Senderov, Ilya Geltser and Boris Kanevsky. During searches in Moscow and Kiev issues 32-35 of SMOT's *Information Bulletins* were confiscated.

In recent years a growing interest in socio-economic problems has been discernible among Soviet dissenters, no doubt partly as a result of the activity of the AFTU, SMOT and the Polish independent trade union Solidarity, as well as the gloomy economic situation in the USSR. Evidence of this trend has been provided by the appearance of such *samizdat* publications as the journal *In Defense of Economic Freedoms*, the collection *Through the Swamp*, which contains essays on various aspects of socialism, and the feminist journal *Women and Russia*. Socio-economic themes have also figured in the free-thinking journals *Searches and Reflections* and *Searches*, which have given coverage to a wide variety of viewpoints. Significantly, Gershuni, a leading members of SMOT, was also an editor of *Searches*.

Two years ago, when I reported about the launching of the major drive against dissent in the Soviet Union (*NS* 13 June 1980), I pointed to the resilient and multi-faceted nature of this phenomenon, arguing that it had reached 'epidemic proportions'. Up to now close to a thousand people are known to have been imprisoned as part of the latest campaign to contain dissidence. □

MADAME BLAVATSKY

INCOMPARABLE GENIUS OR DESPICABLE FRAUD?

The only way to resolve this problem is to read *her* works for oneself, and not what others, unable or unwilling to study and comprehend her monumental works, have said and written. If you are interested in discovering a philosophy, worthy of the highest intellect, embracing all religion and philosophy, and much science, we suggest you write for a reading list to:

The Blavatsky Trust (B)

P.O. Box 16, London W3 6HS

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DIARY

Anna Coote

IN four and a half years of scurrying from the Aldwych to Great Turnstile, I never did find a way of cutting *diagonally* across Lincoln's Inn Fields. At whatever point one hops over the wire perimeter fence and tramples across the grass, however judiciously one steers a course between the south-east corner of the tennis courts and the north-west corner of the blue gazebo, one remains frustrated by bandstand, railings and a cordon of trees. The place knows its own charm and means you to slow your pace admiringly – it's a strategy that works, and now I can't pass through without a sense that I am *visiting*; whatever mood it is in will cling to me for the rest of the day.

○

On Monday it was mournful in a fine drizzle, full of brown leaves blown by a peevish wind and pigeons strutting about darkly, impersonating crows. Appropriate, I suppose, to mark the last week of my protracted struggle with the Old Gentleman of the Turnstile.

He seemed harmless enough to begin with. His hands were soft, his manner impeccably courteous, his suit, though threadbare and discoloured, an early monument to good taste. I would stalk him, corner him and challenge him to fisticuffs. He would parry coolly and, finding it distasteful to fight with a lady, let me land a blow or two. When I paused to catch my breath or nurse my Savile-Row-bruised knuckles, he would rest unperturbed, examining his cuticles or flicking specks from his lapels. In I'd go again, raining killer-punches, wanting no less than his back on the boards and my foot on his chest. But the clock ticked on and in the end my enthusiasm flagged. Time to move. Glancing over my shoulder now, I wonder if I have ruffled so much as a hair on his head. Not what I'd call a defeat, however – just good practice.

○

I certainly understand the nature of the beast better than I did when I made my first foray into the office, in Tony Howard's time. As I hovered nervously in reception, a tall, lithe young man in tennis whites bounded past me, calling back to someone up the stairs: 'I've left the article on Sex and Socialism on your desk!' To this day I don't know *who* it was, only that I shortly afterwards applied for a job at the *New Statesman*.

○

Incorrigibly masculine though the *NS* image may be, I can reveal that, for much of the time I was there, it was run almost entirely by women. (Run, that is, in the sense of doing the essential work to get it out every week.) On one occasion we treated ourselves to an evening at the Sanctuary, that paradisical, women-only swimming/sauna/jacuzzi joint in Covent Garden. As we lounged in the swirling, steamy water of the jacuzzi, we all agreed that the best plan would be to transfer the whole operation there: editorial meeting in the sauna, inspirational discussions in the pool, a quick bit of subbing at the salad bar . . . Think what a fine, formative effect it would have had on the character of the paper, if Beatrice Webb had been able to nip off with a bunch of pals to a place like that!

○

It is salutary, though, to see just how much was written about the women's movement in the early days of the *New Statesman*. In 1913, when the magazine was launched, the pages abounded with features, letters and editorials on feminist struggles at home and abroad. The Webbs themselves took a rather toffee-nosed stance on suffrage militancy ('. . . calculated to bring about reactions very damaging to the community without, to say the least, hastening by a single day the coming of the vote'); and their line on 'Freedom for the Woman' – part *thirteen*, no less, in their series 'What is Socialism?' – was horribly eugenicist ('. . . the problem of the status of women . . . on which the future of the higher races ultimately depends'). But they wrote and published countless articles advocating legal and economic independence for women, and reported at length on women's conferences and marches.

○

There was, of course, a hell of a lot going on at the time. One of the main debates that raged in the correspondence columns during the summer of 1913 was on whether the feminists on hunger strike in prison should be force-fed. The Webbs strongly opposed the Cat and Mouse Act and its grisly consequences, but the majority of their correspondents seemed to think that force-feeding was too good for the likes of Mrs Pankhurst. ('If they are to die', wrote E. Ayrton Zangwill, 'I, personally, should think it more humane to send out firing squads and shoot them down.') In the issue of 26 July 1913, there is a fascinating account of the great Women's Pilgrimage, organised by the constitutional suffragists:

> . . . small groups of women set out from Land's End and other remote points of the country . . . the Carlisle, North Wales and Manchester contingents joined forces in the potteries; the pilgrims from South Wales coalesced with those from the West Country at Bristol; the two main bodies of the Kentish army met at Tonbridge; the ranks of the East Anglian pilgrims were enlarged by tributaries from the coast and inland towns of Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex; the army of the Great North Road drew from the Eastern Midlands; that of the Watling Street was augmented from the Birmingham district, from the villages of Warwickshire and Oxfordshire and from the new, crowding suburbs of Buckinghamshire . . .

○

I am glad to announce that, after an exhaustive inquiry, I have managed to locate the *NS*'s boardroom pictures. Some of you may recall that this valuable collection of past editors' photographs disappeared one stormy day in April when a new editor had just been appointed by the *NS* board. The culprit, whose name I have promised not to reveal, confesses that only the intervention of a wiser colleague prevented their being cast that night into the Thames. It was no childish prank, I was earnestly assured, but a symbolic protest on behalf of the disenfranchised: 'the seizure of the Household Gods'. I understand they may soon be restored.

ROGER WODDIS

A bigger bang

'We like to think the customer will be getting more bang for his buck. This is a private venture activity designed for what we believe will be the battlefield demand for the late 80s and 90s.' – a spokesman for Westland Helicopters at the Farnborough Air Show.

Some are in the business
Of purveying meat and fish,
Or, if the devil dress her not,
Sell Woman as a dish;
But praise be to the armourers,
Of whom Will's Chorus sang,
The drummers up of business
Who provide a bigger bang.

Now customers are crowding
Round the goodies on display,
And nothing can compare with all
Their wherewithal to pay.
The isle is full of noises
And the dove is out of luck,
But there's nothing down in Farnborough
That speaks louder than the buck.

This is a private venture
For the battlefield to be,
With every chance demand will last
Till 1993.
But though orders hit the ceiling,
They'd be level with the floor,
If the weaponry went public
And they privatised the war.

THIS ENGLAND

£3 book tokens for entries printed (on postcards, please).

☐ Prince Edward passed three A levels. So did Vietnamese refugee Chaun Nguyen, of Swindon, who arrived in the UK three years ago unable to speak English. – *Financial Times* (Stanley Alderson)

☐ A council scheme offering free golf for the unemployed in Sheffield has upset regular players and greenkeepers, who are having to dive for cover as wild shots pepper the municipal courses . . . The city council chief recreation officer, Mr Arroll Winning, said: 'It has become impossible to maintain courses without greenkeepers being hit by golf balls. The unemployed are not conscious of the etiquette of the game.' – *Daily Telegraph* (G. Moor)

☐ A 66-year-old widow has been told by her vicar that she must die before the end of September if she wants to be buried with her husband. – *Daily Telegraph* (Keith Norman)

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LETTERS

The dangers of asbestos

Richard Peto, Reader in Cancer Studies, University of Oxford

Nigel Pollitt's article ('Licence to kill renewed', *NS* 27 August) draws justifiable attention to many issues relating to the history of inadequate control of asbestos, past exposure to which is currently causing about 1,000 unnecessary deaths per year in England.

This number has been estimated (with perhaps twofold uncertainty) by noting that (1) about 300 deaths per year in England and Wales are due to mesothelioma, a type of cancer whose occurrence is usually due to asbestos, and by noting that (2) in many studies of asbestos-exposed workers, asbestos caused about three times as many deaths from diseases other than mesothelioma as it caused from mesothelioma. Moreover, this figure of about 1,000 asbestos-induced deaths per year is probably rising (to judge by the steady increase over the past decade or two in the annual number of deaths certified as being due to mesothelioma).

This rise is due to the delayed appearance of the effects of past exposures to asbestos, and although reliable data on trends in past exposures do not exist, analogy with what is known of the patterns of past exposure in the United States suggests that the epidemic may reach a peak of perhaps two or 3,000 such deaths per year (plus much disability). After this, it should begin to subside, especially if increasingly strict controls are now imposed. The foregoing estimates suggest that there will be a total of about 50,000 asbestos-induced deaths in Britain over the next 30 years or so.

50,000 deaths is a number so enormous that it is difficult to comprehend – for example, it greatly exceeds the likely number of murders during the same 30-year period – but comprehension of it is not assisted by your correspondent mistakenly reporting that 500,000 asbestos-induced deaths are to be expected during this period. I have examined the source of his exaggerated estimate, and it is not a document 'published by the US government', but merely a hurriedly concocted unpublished typescript, based on the absurd assumption that all workers ever exposed to any asbestos are at as great risk as people who have been heavily exposed for decades!

Because it is so widespread asbestos may well be the worst occupational carcinogen ever. But strict regulation of asbestos exposures in a way that reduces the risks substantially may be possible, and the debate as to whether to attempt this or whether to go for an outright ban (since no matter how low the exposure, *some* risk will remain) should be informed, and not misinformed, by journals such as yours.

No politics here

Michael Posner, Chairman, Social Science Research Council, London EC4

Henry Neuberger (*NS* 20 August) is one of the nicest as well as the most able economists. I know that he will always write the truth as he sees it, whether at the Treasury or in the *New Statesman*. Nevertheless when he writes . . . '[the SSRC's] preference for Liverpool over Cambridge can only be understood in terms of Minford's support for the present Government's policies', he is totally wrong on the facts.

The SSRC, which manages the consortium that made the decisions about Professors Godley and Minford, among others, does not allow political considerations to determine its choices. This freedom from politics, independence from Westminster, is essential for us. It will be preserved, come what may.

Babbage's engines

Charles Fyffe, London NW6

Your review of the new book about Babbage (*NS* 27 August) states that it is the first full-length biography. I'm not sure what that means, but a biography was published in 1964 by Hutchinson's called *Irascible Genius* and written by Maboth Moseley. It was described in the blurb on the front-cover flap as the 'first full modern biography' so there were presumably still others.

The opening of chapter one states that Babbage said he was born in London but was in fact born at Totnes. And there is more to show for his efforts than just part of the Difference Engine. The Science Museum also has part of the uncompleted Analytical Engine. It was the punched-tape controlled Analytical Engine that would have been a mechanical computer as it could directly add, subtract, multiply and divide, whereas the Difference Engine could only add, the other processes being reduced to a series of additions.

The spirit that declined to back Babbage is as strong as ever. Over a hundred years after the government stopped payments to Babbage the first electric computer built by the GPO at Bletchley for code-breaking was dismantled and forgotten and the Americans, unchallenged, claim that the first electric computer was ENIAC that began operating in 1946.

Misquoted

Richard Dennis, Rediffusion plc, London SW1

In your article 'More haste, worse programmes' (*NS* 30 July), you have seriously misquoted me in two separate places – once in the caption of the accompanying photograph, and once in the text.

In both places, you quote me as saying 'Cable TV has nothing to do with public service'. You have omitted the vital word 'broadcasting' at the end of this quotation, and the omission completely destroys the sense of the quotation. In addition, the misquotation has the effect of making it sound as if cable television does not serve the public which, of course, it does.

Furthermore, you are quite wrong in your reference to the Independent Television Authority's decision in 1967. The Authority's published explanation stated: 'The Authority, with its principle of programme quality in mind, felt that great benefit would accrue to the system if the abilities of ABC Television and Rediffusion Television were to be combined to provide the weekday service for London. The Authority decided that such a new group would be stronger than any of the other London applicants and later offered the weekday contract to Thames Television Limited, which was a combination of the two companies'.

For the record

Rt Hon. Lord Byers, House of Lords, London SW1

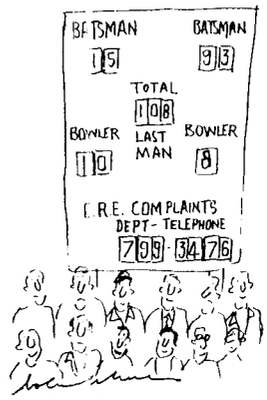
In the article 'A Little crude, Mr Tebbit' (*NS* 20 August), Patrick Wintour states that 'the Tories have "agreed in principle" to a proposal from SDP Peers – at present inserted as a new Clause 1 in the Employment Bill in the House of Lords – which makes it mandatory for a company to state in its annual report what progress has been made towards employee participation'.

This is totally misleading. On the first day of the Report stage of the Employment Bill, the Government voted *against* the Liberal/SDP employee-participation amendment. The amendment, which was moved by Liberal Employment Spokesman, Lord Rochester, was carried by four votes. Only four Conservative Peers voted with the combined opposition of Liberal, SDP, Labour and Cross-Bench Peers. Thus the Government were forced to consider the matter, and made a statement before the second day of the Report stage about their intentions. Much as they would probably have liked to remove the new Clause at Third Reading in October, they have obviously decided to make the best of an embarrassing defeat by saying that they 'agreed in principle' with the theme of the amendment.

Googlies & flippers

Sally Dimon, London W2

As an active feminist and ardent socialist, I hope I will be permitted to enter the debate in your columns about spin bowling (Letters 27 August).



The final Test match at Headingley was won by England, as the Pakistani captain pointed out, through some blatantly racist decisions taken by the umpires: how many lbw decisions did Paul Foot's hero Abdul Qadir receive in his favour? None whatsoever!

The problem is not exclusively, as F. Chatterjee suggests, the 'glamorisation' of macho, male-oriented fast bowlers, but the absolute necessity of educating umpires to appreciate the very real needs of third-world bowlers – and to make more compassionate decisions in their favour.

Fetters of gold

Steven Wilson, London SW17

Re the editorial 'Put not your trust in bankers' (*NS* 27 August). The bankers' observation that 'if you owe the bank enough money then you own the bank' has a historical pedigree of some interest. As the Englishman, Fynes Moryson, put it for the 16th century:

> If the King of Spayne not paying his debt to the Genoesi, or stopping the payments Course for a tyme, can make all them and their bancks breake and faile in creditt, I may boldly say he hath them fast bound in Fetters of gold.

–Fynes Moryson, *Shakespeare's Europe*, ed. Charles Hughes (London, 1903), p.113; quoted by Brian Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford, 1971, p 4)

Or as the late S. J. Perelman put it: 'It takes two to tango, but only one to squirm.'

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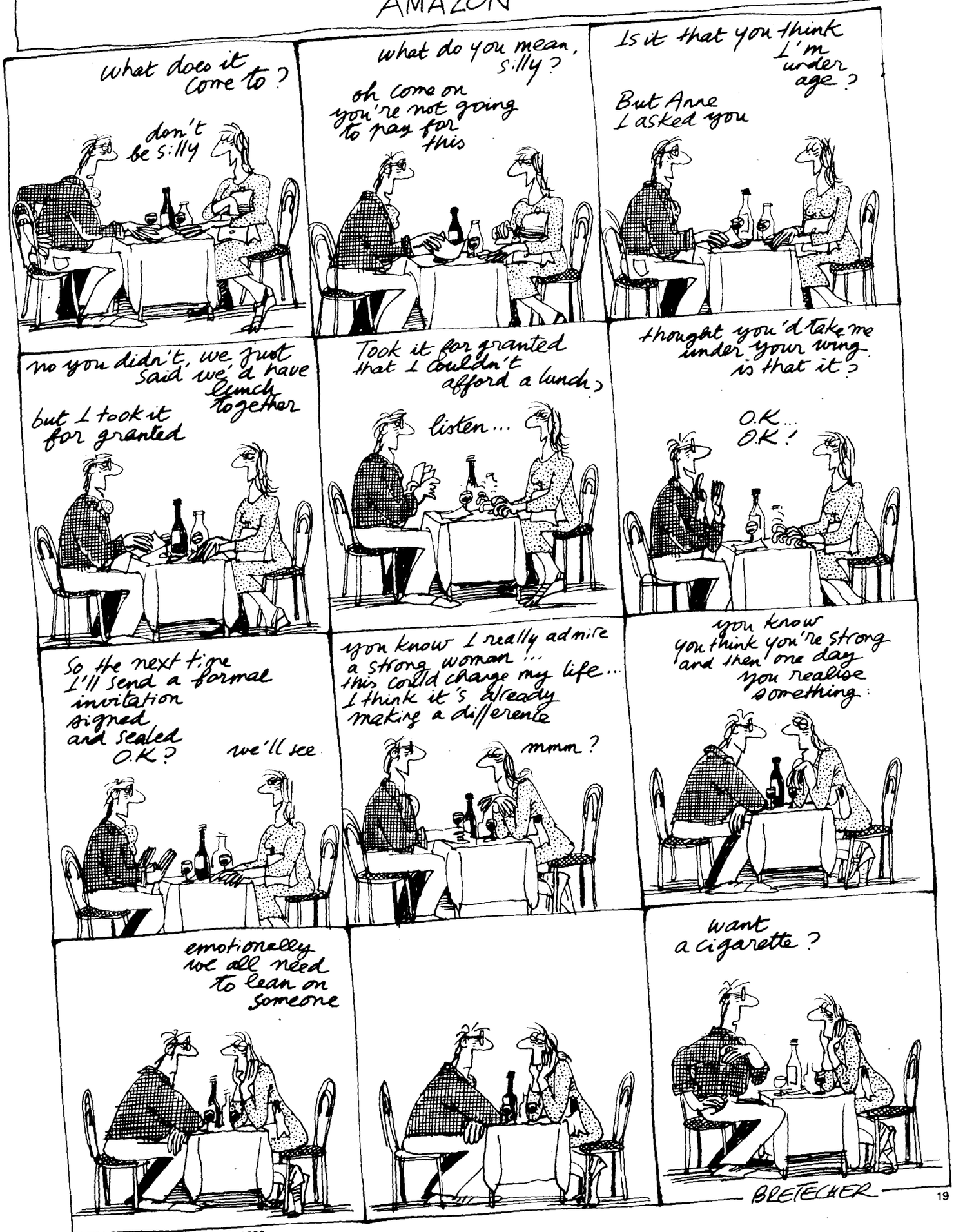
BRETECHER

AMAZON



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Blow-out

ANNE SMITH reflects on Edinburgh's brief orgy of the arts

THE Scots' nature has often been described, by the natives themselves, as inclining to 'a hunger or a burst', and in no area of national life is this so clearly demonstrated as in the arts. For three weeks in August-September Edinburgh is quite literally bursting at the seams with cultural events. For the rest of the year it remains the cultural desert so aptly described by Tom Stoppard as 'the Reykjavik of the South'.

Little wonder, then, that the citizenry display signs of severe cultural dislocation at this time of the year. Where the arts are concerned, there is overwhelming evidence to suggest that the Scots prefer to go hungry at any time. Just as they used to say there were children living in Leith (which runs into Edinburgh a few steps downhill from Princes Street) who had never been to Edinburgh, so I discovered on a recent foray 50 miles north to Fife, that outside the capital the world is full of people who never heard of the Festival, and that the more enlightened ones think it synonymous with 'Military Tattoo'. Ordinary working folk queue for hours to get tickets for the Tattoo, and travel long distances to see it. They ignore the Festival as hard as they can.

Last Thursday night, though, the barriers between the cultural intelligentsia and the militaristic plebs came down with a bang. There was an open-air performance by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra of Handel's *Music for the Royal Fireworks* on the bandstand in Princes Street Gardens, complete with a firework display from the Castle above. It started at half past ten. Thousands of people filled the gardens and the pavement above. Many had no idea what was going on, but it was a braw bricht moonlit nicht. A laddie pushed by me with, 'What's gaun on? Is it country bluidy dancin' or what?' but three-quarters of an hour later, as the fireworks burst over the Castle, he was naively thrilled: 'Aw Christ boys, this is magic.' 'S magic Ah'm tellin' ye'.' And commented at the end, on the fireworks, 'Min, that must've been at least a £5 box . . .'

It *was* magic, so much so that I came near to forgiving John Drummond, the Festival Director, all his mistakes. That same afternoon, in the shambolic Assembly Rooms Centre, I'd been part of a queue who were generally and reluctantly agreed that he was a worse Director than even Peter Diamond had been. Because there is no guide to the quality of Fringe performances until it is too late to get tickets for them, many people think to play safe by buying tickets in advance for the official productions. It's much like the difference between settling for an established plumber rather than a cheap probably unreliable cowboy.

People who paid anything from £5 to £25 to see the Dresden State Opera Company have their dismal way with Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos* must have felt they'd paid for the plumber and got the cowboy job. I was sorry I was sitting in a complimentary press seat: it would have relieved my feelings to have been able to demand a refund of £17.50, then handed it back in return for an explanation of what on earth the lumpish Dresdenites were doing with the six yards of export-reject printed brinylon, or if they really do think that a man wheeling a woman once round the stage on a striped bicycle is Commedia dell' Arte.

Yet nobody walked out: it was 'The Emperor's New Clothes' all over again. On the other hand, quite a few walked out of the brilliant Japanese dance company Sankai Juku's performances of *Kinkan Shonen*. There is no social credit to be gained, you see, in talking about strangeness and excellence in refined Scottish circles. The Edinburgh bourgeoisie, out in force to see *Ariadne*, possibly even understanding it less than they would have understood Sankai Juku, will come to any sort of trash so long as it is respectable, expensive, and they can dress up for it.

I dwell upon the grim, bum-aching boredom of *Ariadne* not only to make my point about the Philistinism of the Festival, but also to throw John Drummond's own boasts back at him. He was quoted in an interview in the *Sunday Standard* as saying at the outbreak of the Festival that

> when I do spend money – and I'm prepared to spend a lot if necessary – I like to know that the product is worth it . . .
>
> . . . An international festival ought to provide British audiences with things that are new, and exciting, and of the highest quality.

Peter Ustinov's *The Marriage*, the American Rep. Theatre's *Lulu* (though their *Sganerelle* was brilliant in parts) to name only three, were a bitter disappointment to the culture-starved children of Knox. Everywhere you go you hear rebellious mutterings about the poor quality of the drama at this year's official Festival, accompanied by less savage grunts about the music not making up for it.

WHILE the official Festival stays pretty much the same size from year to year, the Fringe has grown steadily from a handful of shows to something like 900 this year. If the whole thing were spread out over the year, it would mean we could choose from three different shows every day of the week. Compress that back into the three-week period, and the absurdity becomes patent, even if you'd nothing else to do but see the Festival. Nobody, of course, attempts to vet the shows for quality before they arrive, and all we have to help us in planning what to see are the listings in the *Fringe Guide*, written by the performers themselves. In short, no help at all, except as a guide to the range of undergraduate interests and humour – or lack of it – and to current trends in every minority group under the sun:

CAMBRIDGE MUMMERS
The Secret Agent by Mark Brickman, adapted from Joseph Conrad. The Victorian underworld forms an explosive background for this political melodrama of madness, murder and despair. Expressionist design, songs of accusation and defence, a chorus of fishermen, pathologists, journalists and beggars.

STIFFNECK THEATRE COMPANY
The First and Final Dream of Giacomo the Fool . . .
A sort of cross between Greek drama and

***Détente:* from the Krauze exhibition at the Edinburgh Festival**

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C.16 Italian comedy and Harold Pinter and Ballet Rambert and King Lear and a painting by Salvador Dali. And that's an oversimplification.

DORIS STOKES
An audience with Doris Stokes. World-acclaimed medium who filled Sydney Opera House three nights running. Is there Life after Death?

OXFORD YOUTH THEATRE
Swedish Neurotica (or a camp little romp through heaven). Guess what happens next? Peter refuses to come out of the closet – but I'm giving away the plot . . .

Mix these with 897 other events, ranging from Highland Games to Bach's Organ Music, to children's shows, to dance, poetry, feminist plays, and reviews, add anything you can dream up, sprinkle liberally with varied interpretations of Commedia dell' Arte and you have the Fringe. Then add the Film Festival, the TV Festival, the Radio Festival and the Jazz Festival.

The pity of it is that so many performers come up glowing with naive hope about becoming another *Beyond the Fringe* or *Kantor,* only to discover that they're stuck out in some mouldy old Masonic Lodge somewhere, where nobody can be bothered to look for them. They go home broke and shattered, believing they're worse than they actually are. What earthly use is there in allowing 900 shows if only 100 or so at best will be seen by more than a dozen folk? The Fringe is a mess. It seems to exist largely to massage the egos of amateur performers, but as often as not turns out to be their Gethsemane.

Among all this, it's impossible to give a fair assessment of the first two weeks; any view has to be personal and prejudiced. For me the things that stood out were Nancy Cole's *With Love, John Lennon:* it was strange, riveting, and gave a touching portrait of the fullness and the madness of the man's life; Sankai Juku, weird and fascinating; the Antonio Galdez Spanish ballet's performance of *Blood Wedding;* the dancing of the Naya Theatre, performed by 30 people from remote villages in Madhya Pradesh, coming to Edinburgh directly from working with Peter Brook in Paris, and a concert by I Musici after which they were forced to perform two encores.

The art has perhaps been the best of it, although the Scottish Arts Council's 'Scottish Art Now' exhibition and the Italian Impressionists have been severely panned. 'Miro's People' at the Modern Art Gallery can't be praised highly enough; an exhibition of the work of Andrzej Krauze, the now expatriate Polish cartoonist, in the Assembly Rooms pulls you up among the chaos: his cartoons for *Solidarnosc* are particularly poignant; the Man Ray exhibition is stunning; the exhibition of British Watercolourists was a quiet revelation to me. Less quiet but even more of a revelation is the exhibition at the 369 Gallery of Pat Douthwaite's series of illustrations for an alphabet of goddesses by Robert Graves: wickedly apt works of sheer genius. Not only that, she's Scottish and female . . . I begin to think there might be hope for us after all. (With apologies to all the brilliant performers I've missed.) □

GREECE: Christopher Hitchens

Urbane guerrilla

Something Ventured by C. M. WOODHOUSE *Granada* £12.50
Karamanlis: The Restorer of Greek Democracy by C. M. WOODHOUSE *Oxford* £19.50

> We still cooperated in a few unspectacular activities: for instance, we jointly founded and funded the periodical *Engineer* as a vehicle for intellectual propaganda. But the CIA became increasingly pre-occupied with power and prestige, and increasingly confident that it no longer needed British expertise so much. We were also thought to be soft on Communism.

If only all ex-MI6 officers wrote like that. And if only all Tory back-benchers had a record of defending the Kenyan Asians, opposing the American war in Vietnam and denouncing the Greek colonels. I remember vividly at Oxford, when the disgusting Harold Wilson was Prime Minister and Woodhouse was the local Tory candidate, how shaming it was that on so many issues he proved better than Labour.

I can recall meeting him in Athens in 1974, with the dictatorship in shards and the streets full of jubilation. It was at a reactionary cocktail party, where he shone by comparison and spoke of the returning exile leaders as friends from resistance days. Woodhouse is in love with the Hellenic world and the finest chapters of this memoir concern his time there during the Second World War:

> I collected a little intelligence and much Cretan fantasy. But it was a fruitful experience for the future. I learned to live clandestinely, to feed on snails, mountain grass and ground acorns, and to deal with *kapetanioi* and *pallikaria*, both nationalist and Communist, though Communists were rare in Crete. I narrowly escaped capture two or three times. I also learned that the only bearable war is a war of national liberation.

Woodhouse belongs to the tradition of Patrick Leigh-Fermor and Fitzroy Maclean: people of a certain class who have been touched by partisan warfare and the deep engagement with another culture which it brings. So, what can such men do when the war is over, and the reign of sophists and calculators is restored? There is always the option of what used to be boyishly called 'cloak and dagger' work.

Woodhouse took this option and found himself (history to such people being part glorious joke and part accident, they always 'find themselves') heading 'Operation Boot'. This deceptively jovial nickname, for what was known to Kermit Roosevelt and the CIA as 'Operation Ajax', referred to the secret stratagem for the overthrow of the Mossadeq government in Iran. It was also the plan to restore the Shah as absolute ruler and as absolute defender of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Corporation. On the evidence of this chapter, I should say that Woodhouse is better with Greeks than with Persians, and should have stuck to the former.

The breezy way in which he describes the manipulation and cynicism of the plan is frankly nauseating – so is the otherwise attractive diffidence with which he habitually invests his own role in events. Just as, in the section on Greece, he affects a *faux naiveté* about the influence of the Communists on the resistance, so here he is deceptively wide-eyed about the despotic (including despotic Islamic) forces he was helping to put in play. As if suddenly aware of it, he has the grace to add:

> What we did not foresee was that the Shah would gather new strength and use it so capriciously and tyrannically, nor that the US government and the Foreign Office would fail so abjectly to keep him on a reasonable course.

Woodhouse might have acted differently if he could have foreseen that (not very improbable) outcome. But his employers and backers would not have. By then, the age of the talented amateur and the urbane guerrilla was dead. And we all know what sort of people MI6 recruits now.

ON THE occasion when I met Woodhouse in Athens I was revisiting the city to write an article for the *NS* that I now regret, which argued that the succession of Karamanlis to power was a political con-trick. I thought that he had too many former junta types in his entourage, and that he was trying to save conservative Greece from the just wrath that should have befallen it. Wrong again. Karamanlis was and is a committed democrat, in the crucial sense that when his conservative principles conflicted with his democratic ones, it was the former that he sacrificed. He has proved this in his quarrels with the Royal Family, with the army, with the filthy rich, with the Americans and with his own party. The election of Andreas Papandreou without a shot being fired is, though Woodhouse does not say so, the real vindication of Karamanlis and the culmination of his work.

As a semi-official biography, a portrait with background, this book is a success. It's also a decent guide to post-war Greek politics. But it is so routinely and uniformly a work of devotion that it becomes cloying and exhausting after a while. Woodhouse even puts a friendly construction on the spottiest part of Karamanlis's record – his period in power in the early Sixties when he made and lost a number of wagers with the hopelessly reactionary power-brokers around the Palace. The murder of Grigoris Lambrakis, for instance, is passed over with indecent speed. Oddly, it's not necessary for his argument that Woodhouse excuse this interlude. The point of Karamanlis, as even his enemies will concede, is that when genuine democracy *was* at last possible in Greece, he was prepared to make the personal and political sacrifices that were relevant to its defence. The title-page honour of 'Restorer of Greek Democracy' is, even so, not properly his. It was Cyprus, by resisting the colonels and their fascist irredentism, which brought about the collapse of the junta. It was also Cyprus which paid the price for it in blood – and pays it still. □

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DIARIES: Michael Heffernan

Heigh ho

The Noel Coward Diaries ed. GRAHAM PAYN and SHERIDAN MORLEY *Weidenfeld* £15

'Tuesday 20 April. Mother's and Hitler's birthday. Worked a bit and lay in the sun.' The voice is unmistakeable, the sentiment revealing. Not that this new and weighty addition to the Coward corpus has much to tell us that we didn't already know. Covering the post-war years (although he kept a war diary from 1941, the bulk of it has already been published), it records the second half of his working life: his new career in cabaret, much pain in the 1950s, when he slid into a black hole of critical ignominy, and his ultimate revival as 'the Master' of English theatre.

The editors – Coward's companion and godson – describe these diaries as 'in effect a series of letters from Noel to his own inner self', and they have got it the right way round. The reader looking for some juicy revelation of the man within will be disappointed. There are only a couple of references to 'Old Black Magic' who 'reared himself up again' in Coward's fifty-eighth year. But who the stimulus was we are not to be told. The sexual stars of the book are undoubtedly Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh; he also comes off as Best Actor, and she as Most Regular Cause of Concern. Both need the occasional firm 'talking-to', Coward's first prescription for other people's unhappiness and, to be fair, his own. These letters to his inner self easily acquire the tones of a petulant, precise stage director, attempting to control, one feels, an emotional, sensitive and often depressed man.

He was also a very successful man, and Freudian speculators on his love-life could well draw inspiration from his financial affairs. Indeed, if his affections were as complex as his housing, they would take some following. Noel liked being at 'home' – in 1951 this could mean London, Paris, New York or his new place in Jamaica, which he already considered replacing while it was being built. Each page of these diaries exudes the smell of new chair covers and neatly stacked typing paper. Hardly an idea for a play or short story is recorded without its being brought to completion within months. But the sense of psychological efficiency goes further; on the surface at least, the past is past, the dead are dead, and he repeatedly calls upon himself to rise above misfortune.

> November 1948. I certainly seem to be going through a bad patch these years but I don't intend to let it get me down. I expected a warm and loving welcome from Paris and got a sock in the kisser. Heigh ho.

Coward enjoyed the consolations of celebrity, and royalty-watchers should certainly read this book, where they will find a close friendship with the Mountbattens, a long relationship with the Kents, several dinners with the Snowdens and encounters, formal and informal, with HM. The Queen Mother, however, is top of the stakes in Noel's book, and their friendship hits its peak when together they sing 'My Old Man Said Follow The Van' at Sandringham.

His political views are depressingly conventional. There are plenty of familiar sentiments on Communism, the passing of Empire, teenagers, the Welfare State and, rather nastily: 'Gandhi has been assassinated. In my humble opinion, a bloody good thing but far too late.' New writers often fare no better. Arthur Miller is 'adolescent and sodden with self-pity. His taste is non-existent'; Beckett writes 'pretentious gibberish'.

> I have just read *Look Back in Anger*, and it is full of talent and fairly well constructed, but I wish I knew why the hero is so dreadfully cross and what about. I cannot understand why the younger generation, instead of knocking at the door should bash the fuck out of it.

This is a book for dipping into. To read it straight through is to be overcome by a sense of false relaxation and false enjoyment. Coward kept himself splendidly free of most of the dramatic neuroses (not a hint of hypochondria) but his famous clipped clarity only thinly disguises the manic intensity of his life. The book is well edited, with short notes on the characters, and I suppose we must believe the editors when they tell us that only the libellous or repetitious has been censored. I should have liked an extra index – of Christian names and nicknames. I kept track of Larry, Binkie and Coley, but forgot for a while who Lornie was, and Winnie I completely lost. □

Badr Shakir al-Sayyab

The Book of Job

Thee I praise!
No matter much misery
nor pain's plenitude.

I praise Thee,
calamity's comforter,
disaster donator.

Didst Thou not
donate me Thy darkness,
treasure unto me
Thy twilight?

Does Sahara salaam
to the raindrop?
Does Sahara anger
if cloud withhold?

Months deep this knife-
wound in my sutured side.
Nor morning pain's ease
nor night's ease for Job's
death's sufferance.

Job's cry:
'I praise Thee,
calamity's comforter;
wounds, as love-gifts,
I embrace.

Thy gifts throb
my heart's beat.
Such gifts
I accept.
Proffer them!'

I pleasure your pains
unto me, scream
stop that sycophant:
'Why don't you gawk at,
envy my love's gifts?'

When fire fevers
this forehead
I feel it a flame's
favour from you.

Incantatiable insomnia!
My eyes attend your sky
till the stars subtract themselves.
My imagination's window
frames your radiance.

Beautiful this night now,
echoes of owl screech.
Car horns from far
and patients' moans.
A mother recites ancestral
legends to her child.

Torrents of sleepless nights.
Clouds curtain my sky's face
screened behind your moon.

'Thee I praise
disaster donator,
cure curator!'

version by Desmond O'Grady

(Badr Shakir al-Sayyab was born in Baghdad in 1926 and died in London in 1964. Desmond O'Grady's last collection, The Headgear of the Tribe, *was published by Gallery Books, Dublin, in 1979.)*

Among this week's contributors:

ANNE SMITH, founder of the *Literary Review* and resident in Edinburgh, is currently working on her second novel and a study of D. H. Lawrence and women.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS is Washington correspondent of the *Nation*.

MICHAEL HEFFERNAN is a BBC drama producer.

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Shorter reviews

Authors Take Sides on the Falklands edited by CECIL WOOLF & JEAN MOORCROFT WILSON *Cecil Woolf* £4.95 & £1.95

At first sight, it would appear regrettable that so many respected authors have succumbed to the 'instant Falklands' temptation, and Paul Theroux is partly right when he says that 'it is laughable that a hundred desk-bound bookworms should offer opinions on a military campaign'. But, on balance, the book does have some value. Granted, neither the subject nor the contributors have the weight of the two previous works, on the Spanish Civil War and on Vietnam, which inspired it; and granted too that some famous names are missing. (*The Times*, incidentally, refused to publish a letter from 27 other writers, including Ian McEwan, John Fowles and Paul Bailey, in opposition to the war). But there is a cross-section of informed literary opinion, and there are some interesting and provocative essays.

Over-all, the Malvinans get the better of the Falklanders, both in terms of votes cast and in quality of polemic. The 'war party' concentrates on the principles of the rule of law, the infringement of national sovereignty, and the grisly nature of the Galtieri regime. The less sophisticated (or more honest) of them talk of a sense of national humiliation, of Munich in 1938, and the notion that 'we had to do something'. Perhaps Ludovic Kennedy and John Rae marshal their thoughts best and with least hypocrisy.

The 'anti-war party' are united in their disdain for 'Mrs Thatcher's Caligula-like immovable rigour' (John Arden). Her callous insensitivity towards possible loss of life and her disregard for the procedures of the UN are often mentioned, but the real strength of this argument is its admirable idealism. These writers refuse to allow that force should be used to settle any dispute, and warn of the nuclear dangers of a knee-jerk foreign policy. Possibly naive, but it is reassuring to know that not everybody was overtaken by blind tribalism during the fighting.

There are several surprises in the book as well. Spike Milligan, comedian and animal-lover, comes down unequivocally on the side of the task-force. Roald Dahl, writer of charming children's books, blames socialism for a 'flabby and idle breed of people who would rather compromise than fight'. But the award for crass, rah-rah levity must go to Jilly Cooper, who writes, in mock seriousness, 'some of those Argentinian officers are so frightfully good-looking one might almost enjoy being taken prisoner by them'.

Frank Kane

Space, Time and Medicine by LARRY DOSSEY *Routledge* £5.95

Like many American doctors, Larry Dossey has thought deeply, read widely and observed acutely. No doubt such feats are easier to perform in Dallas than in Doncaster, but it would be agreeable if there were many more at home like him.What concerns our medicine men are identifiable pathological processes. What concerns Dr Dossey is nothing less than the Holoverse. Calling modern physics in aid he incriminates our intimations of mortality as the cause of our stress illnesses. He identifies the cause of the failure – and what a failure! – of our health care as being due to the application of mechanistic science to a reality which can no longer be understood in these terms. The way he sees it is that many of our illnesses are caused by our misconception of the nature of time. For his money what we persist in seeing as something linear and finite is in fact cyclic and fluid, and what we are suffering from is 'hurry sickness' excacerbated by the 'little death reminders' on our wrists. He reminds us that five years ago none of our present substance existed. That our quinquennial renewal is 'in playful contrast to our ordinary ideas of death'. That what we were then is now incorporated into both organic and inorganic matter. And that not only our anatomy but our consciousness is an interdependent part of a whole.

What we must do, it seems, to be saved from our self-inflicted suffering is to participate in the macrocosm. (Shades of Anthony Powell's Dr Trelawney with his 'essence of the one is the Godhead of the true'!) Certainly not until we can appreciate that life is far from being the property of our individual bodies, or indeed even of our individual thinking apparatus, which Dr Dossey refuses to recognise as residing exclusively in the brain, can we hope for that equanimity which is presently the exclusive property of mystics.

Those readers without a Nobel Prize for physics should be warned to tighten their seat belts to protect whichever organs they think with against this audacious onslaught by the disturbing ideas of an author who, if short on proof, is as strong as they come on stimulating speculation.

Bruce Hepburn

The Sexual Fix by STEPHEN HEATH *Macmillan* £12.95 & £4.95

The Sexual Fix is an academic book that is also rather good to read. Beginning with the Victorians and Freud, Heath subjects the 'sexuality' myth to critical and wry analysis. He argues against the importance ascribed to sex and the apocalyptic orgasm (the Big O, as our American sexologist friends call it). While conceding the sexual revolution's achievements, Heath shows convincingly that in the name of sexual liberation men and women are still fixed in their hierarchical places (the 'sexual fix'); and, by means of that purely sexual emphasis, certain political actualities are continually defused and ignored. Sex is the new religion that we must, imperatively, enjoy – and there is a vastly profitable industry to tell us so.

It is also the modern thematic obsession of different kinds of fiction. As 19th-century literature had courtship as its main theme with marriage as the ending, so, Heath suggests, our 20th-century popular equivalent has sex as its theme with orgasm as the ending. Orgasm is fictionalised as the moment of self-revelation, discovery of the self *au naturel*, of naked and 'real' identity. Consequently the phallus, as instrument of the woman's journey to authentic identity, still preserves its status (and the sexual status quo).

Unlike in his earlier *Questions of Cinema*, Heath writes lucidly. This excellent and scholarly essay is laden with heavily laconic wit as the author dryly quotes from a plethora of sex scenes written in the uninhibited vein. Having questioned the modern sexual gospel, Heath amusingly pre-empts the adverse reaction he anticipates. The final chapter is a dialogue between X (irritated reader – 'one suspects a real dislike of sex' etc.) – and Y (Heath, author). My one disagreement concerns Heath's rather damning discussion of psycho-analysis. He looks only at French Lacanian and American 'sexological' psycho-analysis (is it fair to call that extraordinary practice 'psycho-analysis'?). In fact most modern psycho-analysis does not accept Freud's castration complex theory (viz. penis envy), Heath's prime example of psycho-analytical chauvinism.

Kathy O'Shaughnessy

Modern Islamic Political Thought by HAMID ENAYAT *Macmillan* £14 & £4.95

Being the first of its kind, the Islamic revolution in Iran has captured the imagination of scholars, who are publishing many books. *Modern Islamic Political Thought* is a recommendable example of the genre.

Since Islam is a comprehensive scheme for ordering human life there is an inherent link between Islam and politics. But, like the followers of other faiths, Muslims do not have a monolithic perception of their creed. The great divide among Muslims is between Sunnis and Shias; and the author sketches their history, outlining the conflict and concord between them. Given the voluminous and diverse contents of their basic documents – the Koran, *hadith* (traditions) and *sunna* (custom) – it was, and still is, possible for the scholars to draw varied, even contradictory, conclusions.

The problem has become more acute over the past two centuries when the Muslim world has had to respond to such 'outside' ideas as nationalism, democracy and socialism. Since Islam rejects the use of ethnic particularity as the only criterion for group identification, it is (in Enayat's view) antithetical to nationalism. In other areas, the situation is less clear-cut.

Though Islam disallows arbitrary rule by one person or group, and enjoins upon a government consideration of the wishes of the ruled, modern Muslim thinking has, the author points out, produced no scheme for adapting the ethical/legal precepts of Islam, or the institutions of a traditional society, to democracy.

Finally, Enayat explains that, as systems of socio-political engineering, Islam and socialism have much in common. They both have a 'high regard' for collectivism – for striking a balance between individual and corporate interests – and for an equitable distribution of wealth. Thus, the book provides a scholarly summary of the Islamic world's response to modern political thoughts originating outside its borders.

Dilip Hiro

A Man's Tale by JOHN PEPPER *Quartet* £6.95

Although in many ways this is a voyage of self-discovery in the classic '60s mould, culminating, appropriately enough, in a Buddhist monastery in Dumfriesshire, John Pepper's autobiography is a spiritual quest with a difference. Since he was a child, Pepper has periodically taken to wearing women's clothes. In Doncaster, where he was brought up, this was hardly the sort of thing to shout about and Pepper spent his teens and twenties vainly trying to subjugate the female side of his nature. Eager to prove his virility, he chased a multitude of women with considerable success. Professionally, everything seemed to be going well; he wrote articles, fronted his own television show and got an Arts Council grant to write a novel. But all the time doubts persisted about his real identity and eventually, after a suicide attempt and sundry nervous breakdowns, he found solace with a group of Tibetan monks who taught him that there are male and female aspects in all of us.

There is a plea in here for what the publisher rather optimistically terms 'Men's Lib', but much of Pepper's case consists of lambasting feminists for being dogmatic and having blackheads. He complains of sexual stereotyping and yet writes that he feels more 'gentle' in women's clothes whereas he's 'abrasive' in men's. Judging by the tone of the book – written in a mixture of gritty, no-nonsense prose and overblown lyricism – Pepper's egotism was almost as much to blame for his crises as his transvestite inclinations. By the end he seems to have come to terms with both, which cannot but evoke admiration, even if one's patience is likely to be wearing pretty thin.

John Preston

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FICTION: Marion Glastonbury

Plain terms

Company Parade by STORM JAMESON *Virago* £3.50
Women Against Men by STORM JAMESON *Virago* £3.50
Dutch Shea Jr by JOHN GREGORY DUNNE *Weidenfeld* £7.50
Sounding the Territory by LAUREL GOLDMAN *Faber* £7.95
A New History of Torments by ZULFIKAR GHOSE *Hutchinson* £7.95

'Think of a street of little houses, a plant in the window, ivory lace curtains; in each house a woman dusting, making beds, mending, looking in the oven, looking at the scrubbed toes of children's boots. How can you get her to listen to you?' In 1919, Storm Jameson worked for a London advertising agency in order to support her infant son, as does Hervey Russell, the ambitious young novelist in **Company Parade,** who is briefly stirred by the democratic challenge of the copywriter's craft: 'The greatest artist ever born couldn't do more with words', her boss asserts. But Hervey shrinks from telling lies about soap. Distrusting the metropolitan Establishment she had hoped to join – the self-seeking literati; the cynical Press – she finds love, friendship and, ultimately, betrayal, among earnest radicals and disorientated ex-servicemen. Returning to her bleak Yorkshire home for a family visit, she discovers an affinity with the stoical neighbours whose obscure toil she has managed to escape: housewives whom only salesmen would notice. The desire to honour the ordinary, to speak in plain terms for unappreciated women, rich and poor, decent or disgraced, also animates the three novellas of **Women Against Men** – first published, like *Company Parade,* in the 1930s. As individuals doggedly make the best of their unpromising sexual bargains, moral strength and significance may be discerned where they are least expected: in pubs, bedsitters, teashops.

Early socialist fears of thought-control by business interests manipulating technology seem amply justified today. Modern American fiction is furnished with brand-names. Slogans punctuate dialogue. Dreams are peopled by celebrities. The eponymous protagonist of **Dutch Shea Jr,** a divorced lawyer with a clientele of micks and mafiosi, keeps the television on in his bedroom as a nightlight, so, when an armed intruder enters, violence in the dark mingles with a shoot-out on the screen. The staccato patter of wisecracks and gunfire in this sort of comedy often gets commended as 'gutsy'. Indeed, entrails are prominently featured throughout. Carbuncles fester; a colostomy complicates rape. A baby is dismembered by a lawn-mower; a flooded cemetery disgorges the corpse of a convict, Shea's father. His daughter, blown to bits when the IRA bombs a London restaurant, lands in a sorbet dish. (Her age, we are told, is 17.9 years: the advertised life-expectancy of a Volvo.)

Why should a novelist of obvious wit and energy write as if satire were in competition with snuff movies? The traditional art of 'getting inside a character' is here taken literally, and the urge to penetrate human identity via the mucous membranes leads straight to the morgue. Among members of the cast saved from decomposition, my favourite is Clarice from the convent, whose consultancy service helps ex-nuns to package themselves for a second career. But Dunne is not consistently irreverent. Shea's last words are, 'I believe in God.' So far, intimate confessions have revealed only carnal knowledge. The stream of consciousness is a body-fluid; the health of the soul lies in the medicine cabinet: 'She had Comprazine suppositories and Septra DS for systitis and Hydro Diuril for premenstrual symptoms and Naturetin-K for bloat'. If pharmacology has co-opted the inner life, what is left for literature to analyse?

Jay Davidson, the handsome narrator of **Sounding the Territory,** is in his late twenties, and has been searching for clues to his condition during six years of intermittent group therapy. He understands the community programme well enough to avoid transfer to the State hospital but a complete diagnosis, the truth, eludes him. A tireless tracker, he sounds the territory of his case-notes, the pathology of ward-staff and fellow-patients, a home-study training-course for private investigators, the jobs he applies for, the girls he tries to love, the inventory of bookshelves and medicine cabinets: 'familiar to me as the Pepsi-jingle but I feel compelled to sneak a peek anyway.' There have been other bright, confiding, poignant accounts of precarious sanity: psychic journeys interspersed with sharp institutional anecdotes and wry memories of home and college. (Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* is a classic of the genre.) But Jay's reconnaissance flight through other minds has a rare grace and generosity that defy comparison and summary.

The travels of Zulfikar Ghose, encompassing education in British India, a literary and journalistic career in England, and an associate professorship at the University of Texas, have also brought him to the Amazon Basin where **A New History of Torments** is set. This exotic version of the pastoral mode contains several wayfaring strangers who are welcomed by chance to sumptuous palaces in various parts of the forest. But, close by, native savagery reasserts itself; fraud and dysentery are rife; adventurers fall prey to cannibals, and luscious ladies become vengeful harpies, two of whom the hero is obliged to strangle post-coitally.

The trouble with a fairy tale for the machine age is that, once you update archetypal motifs, bathos threatens. The orphaned heir, robbed of his patrimony by a wicked uncle, is sent into exile to swot for entrance to LSE. The coincidences of the plot depend on a series of technical hitches – gremlins ex machina – that suggest singular ineptitude and naiveté on the part of the worldly wise and fabulously rich. The symbolic role of the golden coach is taken by a Lincoln Continental, stuffed with smuggled bullion and radiant with Motor-Show hype. The title and chapter-headings are borrowed from poems by Pablo Neruda, who would scarcely have chosen to dignify a lurid extravaganza in which prospects for revolutionary change are embodied in an American con-man and an English yob □

MEMOIRS: Michael Hofmann

Grosz in Amerika

A Small Yes and a Big No by GEORGE GROSZ *Alison & Busby* £12.50

George Grosz's autobiography, *A Small Yes and a Big No*, is something of a deception, not least because the proportions in the title might easily be reversed: *A Big Yes . . .* From a man whose drawing technique was compared to the slash of a razor-blade, and whose propensity for hatred left nothing untouched, not even his own propensity for hatred, this is an astonishingly mild-mannered book. It is also a comprehensively altered account of his life and opinions.

Grosz suggests as much in his preface, where he talks ominously of fog and forgetfulness and missing documents. Warming to his subterfuge, he declares, 'my proneness to mystic inwardness is the true inheritance of my race'. Possibly so, but it is not the only one – and it is certainly not the quality for which George Grosz, of all Germans, will be remembered and prized. Nor is mystic inwardness the guiding light for this book, for Grosz is not in the business of spiritual autobiography. Rather, *A Small Yes* shows him quite calculatingly rewriting his own history. The book first came out in 1946 in the United States, where Grosz had already been living for thirteen years as an exile. He was desperately anxious to make a belated contact with a wealthy, placid and alien new public; to avoid antagonising the nervy currents of anti-Communism; and to make money.

One of the most moving aspects of the book is his frantic love of America – a love that he shared, incidentally, with Brecht, as well as subsequent generations of Germans. Nor was Grosz necessarily doing violence to himself or 'selling out' in his pathetic attempts to please Americans and win their approval. The intensity of his work and its political motivation had been receding for years, so that his humble wish to find work as an illustrator arose out of a profound political disgust allied to his professionalism as an artist. It appears astonishing that a man of whom it was written in 1928, 'The name George Grosz stands implacably over the last chapter of the decline of the bourgeoisie', should have wanted nothing more than to be a prosperous artist in America – and should have found it in himself to admire the type of bland com-

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mercial art that prevailed there – but his love of both prosperity and America was deeply rooted. His elegant appearance and his heavy, handsome face always stood in direct contradiction both to his role of *Bürgerschreck* and to the images of mankind that proliferated in his graphics. As for America, it had been an obsession since boyhood; it had produced his wide-shouldered sartorial style, and anglicised 'George' of his name, and had even saved him from arrest on one occasion in Berlin, when he confronted the police with an American accent and identity card, both false. The incident is one of several that find no place in the book. Instead, he tells, rather less hair-raisingly, how, as a boy, he copied by hand the whole of James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*.

IN VIEW of these circumstances, both external and internal, it would be extremely hard on Grosz to condemn him for the slant in his autobiography. However, it would be as well to be aware of it. An early omission is his birth, which was in Berlin. Grosz's account begins five years later, when his family had moved to Pomerania – no doubt to lend symmetry and credibility to his self-projection as a country boy spoiled by the city. After this, it is perhaps to be expected that there is nothing on the furore of the late '20s and early '30s over his drawing of Christ with a gas-mask – subject of the one great blasphemy trial in Germany to date – and that his account of his Dada period gives all of the silliness but little of the electrifying originality. His truly remarkable collaborations with John Heartfield in photo-montage and his important work on Piscator's production of *Schweik* are similarly passed over as though they were of no account. Of these strange omissions and emphases, some, but not all, may be explained by his subsequent anxiety and pessimism over the effectiveness of the political drawing as a medium: 'The time of the caricature as an instrument in the struggle for freedom and progress was long past'. Similarly chastened, Thomas Theodor Heine, the founder of the satirical magazine *Simplicissimus*, observed after the War that while his cartoons had been very popular, as they had also had the effect of making the politicians they caricatured popular, so he had been working against himself.

Perhaps it is not surprising that, as an exile looking back on an output of blackness and vitriol, Grosz should have turned against it, at least in part. His great years still occupy the bulk of this autobiography, but much of what he chooses to remember is superficial anecdote, even on the level of the conductor friend of his turning his back on the Emperor of Japan. People are introduced as 'my friend –'; dinners are frequent and 'delicious'; objects (especially shoes) are described with a degree of covetousness. Between the lines, Grosz recants. He is a difficult man who presents himself as a clown, a misanthrope and nihilist but is fascinated by advertising, department stores, wealthy men. Even his last sentence, an echo of his paintings, is clowning: 'Of life itself I sing, before a sponge soaked in blood wipes the slate clean'. □

ART: John Spurling

Arcadia

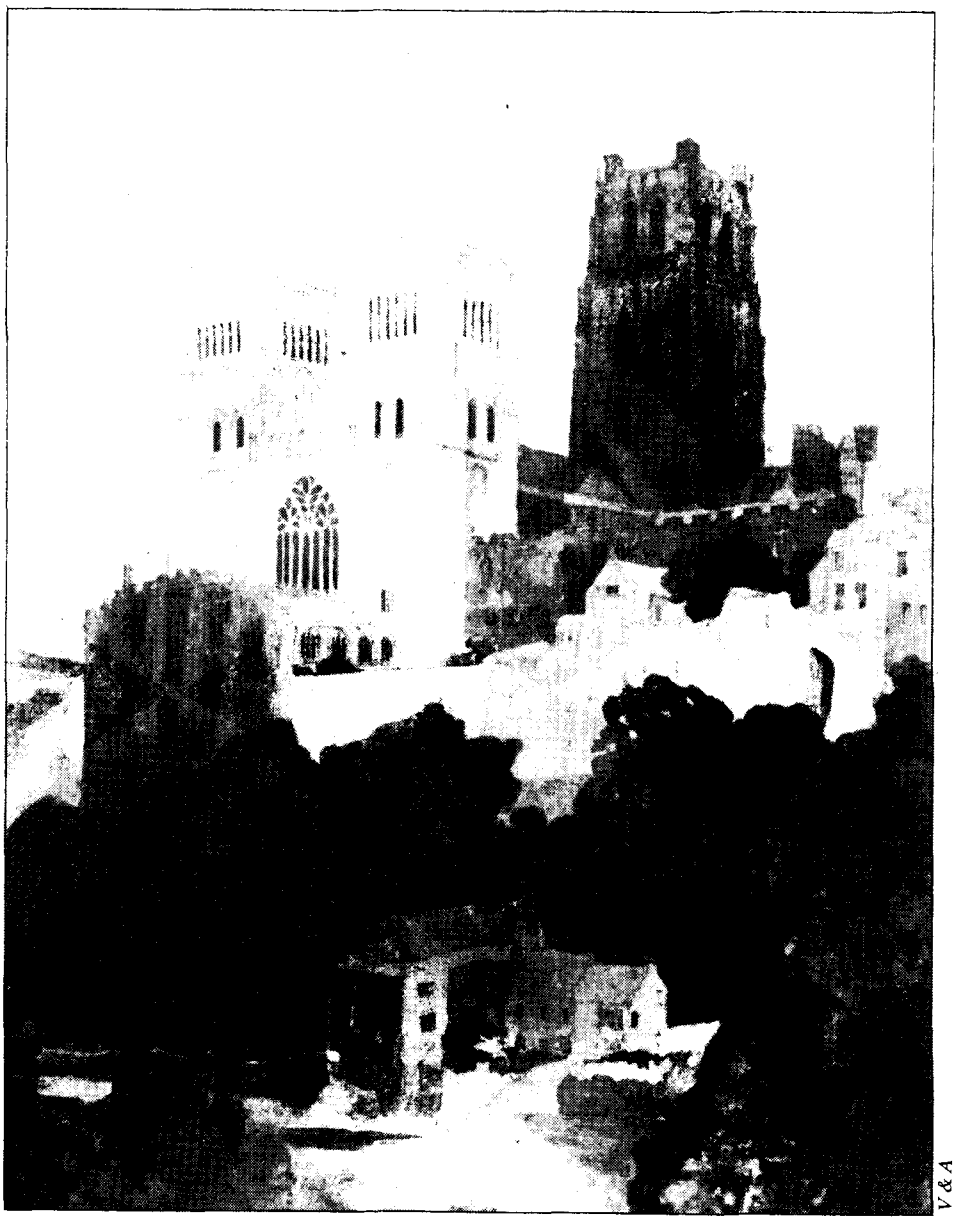
John Sell Cotman 1782-1842 *V & A until 24 October, then Manchester and Bristol*

No one has yet discovered why Cotman was blackballed at the 1806 election to the newly-formed Society of Painters in Water-Colours. His career until then had looked modestly promising. The son of a Norwich hairdresser turned haberdasher, he had moved to London in 1798, shown at the Royal Academy and been awarded a silver palette by the Society of Arts at the age of 18, and acquired several devoted patrons among the gentry of Yorkshire who, considering him 'maniered and gentlemanlike' as well as a genius, treated him almost as an equal. Perhaps some fellow water-colourist considered he was getting too posh and needed a brief encounter with a banana skin. If so, he overdid it, for, unlike Constable who kept on trying to be elected to the RA, or Cézanne who persisted in submitting work they wouldn't hang to the Paris Salon, Cotman threw in his hand at once, returned to Norwich and settled for the penurious existence of a provincial drawing-master. He had a temperament which veered between enthusiastic optimism and deep depression and he became in time a conscientious husband and father of five. Commentators tend to accuse him of a failure of character and nerve, but they should really say that if you are going to be as ambitious and original as Cotman you need a private income like Constable and Cézanne or a public personality like Turner. The Yarmouth banker who employed Cotman for ten years as a drawing-master and architectural draughtsman did say more or less that, in a letter meant to snap Cotman out of one of his depressions:

> The public is a body that cannot be forced. Some extraordinary geniuses may have succeeded in guiding it; but they are few, and the great part of those who have made the experiment have failed. Such amongst us who have to live by it must be content to follow its taste.

Cotman never was content. He neither abandoned his dream of eventual fame and fortune nor, in his best work, compromised with public taste. What he tried to do was to be a reliable journeyman *and* a great artist. He was no great success at the first, dying at 60 of nothing, it seems, but de-

Cotman's *Durham Cathedral*



V & A

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pression and exhaustion, without receiving a single obituary; but no one who spends any time at his bicentenary exhibition can doubt that he achieved the second.

Although the Arts Council's show concentrates on the work of his twenties, Cotman's case is not quite Samuel Palmer's. Cotman's vision, powerful and homogeneous as it was between 1805 and 1810, when he was still under the spell of the North Yorkshire landscape and its hospitable patrons, did not fade. It was pushed aside by his efforts to earn a living, but it returned, whenever he could make room for it, and even developed. He did not try, as Palmer did, to recover a lost domain, but to extend his powers. Cotman's tragedy was that, without encouragement from either the public or his peers, with whom he mainly lost touch once he left London, he was able to develop only sporadically, so that his later work, especially in a severely selective show such as this, looks rather jumbled and scrappy. There are some decent but not particularly exciting oils, various attempts to use the bright holiday-slide colours and appeal to the tourist mentality of the 1830s, the odd history painting and among them all a group of extraordinary works – dark, imagined landscapes, half anticipating Impressionism, which are as unlike 'classic' Cotman as they are anyone else.

Yet in mood – though they are infinitely more sophisticated in technique – these late landscapes are quite consistent with Cotman's earliest known works, the Gothic landscapes which he brought back from a tour of southern England and Wales before he ever discovered Yorkshire. For Cotman was essentially, as his temperament might suggest, a romantic, and the strength of his best work comes from the formal rigour with which he held his romanticism in check. David Thompson, in an excellent essay in the catalogue, compares him with Turner: 'Turner's purpose was dynamism – elemental contrast: fire, air and water. Cotman's was harmonic. His element was earth, given form by shadow and warmed by light.' One might make a further comparison with Constable, whose element was also earth, but especially its texture and density, whereas Cotman loved the marriage of shape and shapelessness, of space and mass, of geometry and organic growth. Of all English painters, Cotman has come the closest to Poussin, not so much by imitation, though he admired Poussin, as by the same desire to compose nature and so to gain control over the feelings it inspired in him .

In one watercolour, *The Devil's Bridge, Cardigan,* the trees in the foreground seem to form a sinister web with their bare, contorted branches, while at the back, half concealed in the tangled undergrowth, are the humps of an ancient bridge. The modern viewer who knows anything of Cotman's later work is in a better position to appreciate the value of this bridge than the artist himself can have been when he painted it, for even two years later, on his first visit to Yorkshire, he was still fascinated by ruins and the chaotic complexity of the natural growths which were slowly overwhelming them.

Then suddenly, with a doorway here (significantly an arched Norman doorway, not a pointed Gothic one) and a cottage and gate there, the penny drops. Everything has been the wrong way round. Like Ulysses holding on to Proteus whatever shape he assumed, the artist needs to control nature before he can explore its mysteries. A piece of architecture can bind it, a bridge or a solid tower, but so can light and shadow, the boles of trees and even a cloud and its reflection in water. Above all, colour can do it, not necessarily nature's colour, but the artist's. The first painting in which Cotman's new mastery of nature is fully apparent shows simply a group of trees coloured blue and rising out of a yellow-brown bank. The witches and demons are banished and with them the sense of exclusion and disquiet. With increasing confidence and skill Cotman brings the massed foliage of Rokeby Park, a distant prospect of Barnard Castle, the wooded banks of the Greta, a rough old drop gate across the brown river in Duncombe Park, and finally even a stretch of rocks and racing foam under his structural sway. Not, of course, that he tames them, in the sense of reducing them to a pretty piece of scenery, but that he harnesses and directs his own experience of them into colours and forms which are directly accessible to the viewer, not as depictions but as experience. In effect they are abstracts, in the true meaning of the word, distillations of a visit to the classical Arcadia made via Yorkshire, England, in the years 1803-5. □

TELEVISION: William Boyd

The hyper-realist

WHAT'S the difference between Realism and Naturalism? The concepts are bandied about as if they are interchangeable, but there is a distinction and one worth trying to pin down, I think, especially as last week saw the start of a Mike Leigh season, the writer with whom the two terms are most frequently associated. In an enjoyable *Arena* (BBC-2) that heralded the start of the 'season' or 'festival', Leigh himself claimed that he wasn't a Naturalist, on the grounds that his plays were structured and distilled from a mass of material and weren't simply random and contingent. By this token, then, the paradigm of Naturalism on film is something like Andy Warhol's *Sleep,* where for a beguiling eight hours you can watch a man do just that. But, that reservation aside, the *Arena* profile contained many references to a striving for reality which informs and motivates all Leigh's plays and films. He 'confronted the viewer with reality'; 'a reality starts to grow' in the improvisation techniques; the ultimate object was 'to be real' and so on. So, strictly speaking, Leigh isn't a Naturalist, in that he doesn't simply set up his camera and let it run; but much of the strength of his work, I think, derives from an illusion of Naturalism, a *cinéma verité* or documentary approach that, in short segments, is almost indistinguishable from anything that a hidden and free-associating camera might pick up.

One could quibble endlessly about the extent to which the two terms overlap, but Realism seems to me a much more general term, with a broad referential base, to be compared with a category like fantasy or science fiction. *Coronation Street* is Realistic in this sense but is a long way from a Leigh play like *Grown Ups.* Perhaps we should call Leigh's work Hyper-realism in the manner of those American artists who spend six months painting sunflash and gleam in the chrome guts of a ton-up motor bike. The point is worth labouring – and I don't usually bother about categories – because the efforts Leigh goes to recall those painstaking artists, and because in his passion to mimic reality – real life – Leigh has discovered a way of making television function more effectively for him than it does for any other dramatist currently at work.

The *Arena* profile – 'Mike Leigh: Making Plays' – wove conversation with Leigh, and some of the actors who've worked with him, with clips from the plays and filmed a workshop – specially set up for the programme – showing the celebrated improvisational approach in practice. Leigh went to RADA and from there to Camberwell Art College. Much was made here of the life class as a source of inspiration, and indeed it seems a fair analogy to make with the television work. The same pernickety observation is required, the models are not glamorous, the line drawing is faithful to every flaw and fold and the end result though nothing like a photographic record, is precise and unflinching. The little play Leigh devised for the workshop – a spoof about a trendy theatrical director with a yen for improvisational techniques – actually didn't seem that good, but it provided an efficient vehicle for displaying the methods. The actors were isolated, invented names for themselves, personalities, biographies, and so on, all under the careful tutelage of Leigh.

In fact, although Leigh claimed to be placing the onus on the actor, what became apparent – if the workshop was any guide – was the extent to which Leigh is in control. He coaxes and suggests all the time, guiding the personality that is being invented in directions that *he* wants and in which the actor seems only too content to follow. As Leigh stressed – and now we're obliged to agree with him – 'it's not a committee job'. One omission though, and a surprising one, was that we only saw the process go so far. Nothing was shown of the way the script was evolved. Is it a distilled and edited transcript of the actors' ad-libs recorded during improvisations? Or is it something Leigh himself writes once the various personalities and contexts have been established? Perhaps it's a trade secret.

This season is very welcome indeed. Leigh is a major television dramatist whose output deserves dissemination and celebration. What makes him most intriguing is that he has not only evolved a unique method but that he also puts it to traditional use: 'In the end it's about telling a story.' So much for the man. Next week: the work. □

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THEATRE: Benedict Nightingale

Women's playtime

Top Girls by CARYL CHURCHILL
Royal Court

MOST of you, like most of me, must have wondered why women's contribution to British drama over the years should have been so slim. Indeed, compared with what the sex has done and does for the novel, it has been positively anorexic. I myself recently brought out a paperback covering our 20th-century theatre by the somewhat glib device of discussing 50 interesting and /or significant plays, and, though I spent some furrowed hours reassessing Jellicoe and Delaney, I couldn't in all conscience include a single one by a woman. And that admirable encyclopaedia, *Contemporary Dramatists,* suggests that my conscience isn't unique or a synonym for male prejudice. It contains essays on some 135 British and Irish playwrights, only 13 of them women; and that number includes Iris Murdoch, Brigid Brophy, Doris Lessing and Maureen Duffy, who have written very little for the stage; Jane Arden, Jellicoe and Delaney, who seem (alas) to have renounced it, and three or four others who have abandoned it still more permanently, by dying since the tome's publication in 1977.

Perhaps the explanation is that theatre managements have historically been, or seemed to be, more aggressive and oppressive than publishing houses. Write a book and you can remain at home, exchanging letters with your editor or maybe tooling into town for a private chat. Write a play, and you're liable to be sucked into a sweaty male world of telegrams and anger, with auditions, readings, meetings, wrangles and the rest of it. It's difficult to imagine a Charlotte Brontë having a furious ding-dong with some actor-manager in the Haymarket pit. Yet this explanation overlooks not only the few women who *did* turn their talents to the drama in former times, but the many more who would have been perfectly capable of standing up to the male establishment in more recent ones. Besides, you can't tell me that the most dedicatedly swinish of chauvinists would have failed to take an interest, if only for reasons of money and prestige, had (say) Ivy Compton-Burnett or Virginia Woolf started to write for the theatre.

Actually, Compton-Burnett is an intriguing case, because her novels, with only the most minimal alterations, *have* worked in the theatre. She was a mistress of dialogue, and in herself tends to disprove a second 'explanation' for women's lack of involvement with the stage, that there's something in the female temperament innately alien to the dramatic form: theatrical work is too external, too rectilinear, too rigidly structured a means of expression for creative minds that tend to be subtler, more curvilinear, and therefore better suited to the novel; and the reason that more women are now beginning to write for the stage is that the old, mechanical 'well-made play' is in decline and a more flexible and elastic style of drama on the rise.

But this is a theory that could be accused of propagating sexist attitudes in a fake-flattering way, and in any case it is challenged by theatrical history. Did Chekhov, say, write more 'rectilinear' plays than, say, Lilian Hellman, Dodie Smith or Clemence Dane, all women, all comfortable with conventional forms, and all successful in their heyday? Maybe the real explanation is rather simpler. Maybe it is that until very recently the theatre, while not excluding female writers *de jure,* was *de facto* a sort of no-go area, a club whose leather armchairs had so long been occupied by male buttocks that women did not even consider entering it. Tradition brainwashed, rather than positively browbeat, would-be playwrights into writing novels or staying mum; and only a few, and those not the most talented, broke the unwritten rules.

However, all that seems to be changing. I don't know whether something has happened to the theatre establishment, to the drama, or to women themselves; but something *has* happened. I find myself reviewing a rapidly increasing amount of work by female dramatists, few less than promising and several much more than that. The past few months alone have seen new plays by Catherine Hayes, Gilly Fraser, Natasha Morgan, Melissa Murray, Olwen Wymark, Ellen Dryden, Claire Luckhan, Sue Townsend, Bryony Lavery, Nell Dunn, Angela Huth, Elaine Morgan, Carol Williams, that hive of industry which calls itself Pam Gems, Louise Page . . . and, just last week, Caryl Churchill, the most accomplished of them all.

One trouble with my book, if I may briefly be personal, is that it gives only a passing mention to her *Cloud Nine,* a wry critique of sexual compartmentalisation that continues to ruffle the brain-cells long after you've seen it. That and *Top Girls,* taken together, show that she has evolved into a playwright of genuine audacity and assurance, able to use her considerable wit and intelligence in ways at once unusual, resonant and dramatically riveting.

Top Girls itself opens with the sort of dinner-party you might conjure up in some spectacularly fanciful game of Consequences. In the Prima Donna restaurant, Pope Joan, who supposedly spread her skirts over St Peter's throne in 854, is hob-nobbing with a Japanese courtesan, a Victorian lady-traveller, Chaucer's ultra-patient Griselda, and Dulle Griet, whom Brueghel painted invading hell in apron and armour. All suffered, either personally or through the abuse of their children, and all coped with the buffeting of their eras, with extraordinary courage. Each tells her tale, sometimes in excitedly overlapping sentences: a device I first thought was supposed to add realism to Max Stafford-Clark's finely played production, but later suspected was meant to imply some lack of mutual attention. Women don't listen to each other enough, don't learn sufficiently from their accumulated experience.

Why else should they now be using the limited freedoms they have painfully won as gruesomely as they too often do? That's the question implicitly raised by the dinner-party's hostess, who is celebrating her appointment as managing director of an employment agency staffed by women as tough and callous as herself, if not quite as adept at slotting girls into a male-dominated business universe. Triumph for Marlene, as she's called, has been bought at the cost of great personal mutilation: meaning the loss of love, and specifically of motherhood, through the odd abortion and one big act of rejection. At this point Ms Churchill sensationally but successfully links the world of the employment agency with that of its boss-woman's sister, who toils in a council house to bring up a backward teenager. Unknown to her, this girl is Marlene's daughter. She handed her over, left for London, and now offhandedly dismisses her as 'a bit thick – she's not going to make it'. What use is female emancipation, Churchill asks, if it transforms the clever women into predators and does nothing for the stupid, weak and helpless? Does freedom, and feminism, consist of aggressively adopting the very values that have for centuries oppressed your sex?

The question becomes plonkingly explicit in a climactic row between Marlene and her sister, the one raving about Thatcher and the success-ethic, the other grimly demurring. That exchange sounds too much like mandatory Royal Court indignation, and could safely be toned down. After all, the play as a whole, arguing through and by human observation, leaves us in no doubt that a quivering finger is being pointed at a society whose highest good is 'making it'. It is articulate, eloquent, alive, proof in itself that we can no longer patronise women playwrights as peripheral. I think Caryl Churchill is well on the way to being a major talent. □

FILMS: John Coleman

Androids

Blade Runner (AA) *Warner West End; ABCs Shaftesbury Avenue, Bayswater, Fulham and Edgware Roads*
Diva (AA) *Screen on the Hill; Odeon, Kensington*
Brimstone and Treacle (X) *Classic, Haymarket*

Less than 40 years from now, Los Angeles will have mile-high skyscrapers steepling out of seedy, jostling streets packed with Orientals, drenched by perpetual rain. Flying cops will zoom above kids on bikes. Gargantuan video-ads, blanketing whole buildings, will adjure one to ENJOY COCA-COLA. Technology, now in embryo, will be commonplace, big cities a dense hotchpotch of slums and marvels. ground-level crowding and sprawling apartments of faded splendour, all roamed over by cruising searchlights. Such, at least, is the futuristic prospect awesomely, horrifyingly and – in the end – rather sillily offered by Ridley Scott and his gifted

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team of designers and special effects people. Drawn at some remove from the novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* by Philip K. Dick (who died earlier this year, more honoured in Europe than in his native America), **Blade Runner** grabs fortissimo at the eyes and ears for a reel or so as it parades its nightmare metropolis while broaching a tale of hunt-the-androids.

Then, as the grim special cop of the title, one Deckard (Harrison Ford), moves into action and tough-guy voice-over, realisation dawns that this is no more than another sub-Chandler plot, tricked out with *Heavy Metal* comic-strip trappings and some Wellesian shots at the grotesque: a genetic engineer's pad, after the good Dr Coppelius's Workshop, alive with mechanical dolls; the Nazi intimations of the android mastermind's cloud-high offices. And there is a Moral, of sorts, heavily promoted. Deckard's quarry is a group of 'replicants' (androids or human-looking robots with a 'life' expectancy of four years) illegally returned to Earth from space-slavery to persuade their Maker to grant them more time, a task genetically beyond him. One by one, and not without grisly rough stuff, Deckard disposes of these nuisances. A cute clue – artificial snake's scale found in bath – is fun but exceptional. Elsewhere, there is the mystery brunette Rachael (Sean Young), with the boxed shoulders and upswept hair of an SS secretary, to furnish intermittent romance – she too is a replicant, but . . . – and a long, last chase over rooftops.

Some of what is wilfully obscure in the script comes from a skimped assimilation of elements in the Dick novel. Thus the stress on treatment of animals in some crucial 'empathy' tests goes for nothing. But the question vexing me throughout was more basic yet. Granted that robots, i.e. machines capable of doing man's work better, more cheaply etc. than man, are here to stay (and granted even, v. *The Stepford Wives,* that a robot to be used for erotic purposes ought probably to have human form), why should *all* the robots turned out by the genetics industry of the future look like people? Nothing in *Blade Runner* explains the necessity for having the bad guy of this piece made in the likeness of an Aryan superman. Why make potentially criminal machines resemble us physically, except as a sick joke? Or, of course, as a plot device without which Mr Scott would have damn all to hang his staggering visuals on?

Minds, however, are best left at home these days when visiting the cinema. Jean-Jacques Beineix, the French director of **Diva**, boyishly admits to shaking pictorial 'cocktails': 'It's my way of breaking the established codes, my kind of revolution for a more spontaneous cinema.' In practice, this kind of invitation to lean back and just drink it all in all too often results in an instant hangover. Here a young postal messenger, Jules (Frédéric Andrei, a bargain-basement Jean-Pierre Léaud), is swiftly embroiled in a double-intrigue. Two dark-glassed Taiwanese want the tape he has improbably and clandestinely made of a black American opera singer in concert: this stunning Cynthia (Wilhelmenia Wiggins Fernandez, who sings better than she acts) mysteriously refuses to have her voice recorded. Then a whore, seconds before being knifed by a couple of thugs, slips a cassette implicating a top cop in vice rackets in Jules's saddlebag; and this ugly couple (one chicly punk) is henceforth hot-foot after the lad too. The intertwined pursuits prove an excuse for a series of highly picturesque if barely consequential little scenes, ranging from a sweet Vietnamese girl shoplifting cheerily in a record store through a Moped jaunt down in the Métro to a (yes, Wellesian, or Hitchcockian) showdown in a vast hangar.

Of characterisation in the conventional sense, or indeed in any sense at all, there is no sign, unless the message be that we are the sum of fragmented moments: in which case, forget it. That there *are* some images of super colour-supplement elegance (as in *Blade Runner*, the apartments tend to be of studio-floor dimensions, in one case big enough for the Vietnamese girleen to roller-skate round her inscrutable, *deus ex machina* man friend as he does a *Kane*-sized jigsaw), that there are even separable sequences of romantic eloquence (a still-life breakfast tray in a lighthouse; a dusk-to-dawn Parisian perambulation of the diva and her Jules) is undeniable. The camera snakes around the disconnected happenings like a besotted boa constrictor, as if it loves them so much it could just hug them to death. Ultimately, *hélas*, it gets its wish.

After a tormented history (completed TV play never screened, a subsequent stage version at the Open Space in 1979), Dennis Potter's **Brimstone and Treacle** now arrives as a theatrical movie, directed by Richard Loncraine, and the unsettling emphasis rather comes to lie on 'theatrical'. What one can conceive of as taking a toll within a small-screen context (where its effect would inevitably be heightened by playing against sitcom conventions – and the ill-fated Mr and Mrs Bates have their sitcom side) or possibly on a fixed-set stage (where artificiality of decor admits of artifices of language) here registers as a succession of jarring attempts to get a reaction at any price. The notion, with its echoes of Pasolini's *Teorema* and Orton's *Entertaining Mr Sloane,* of a diabolic young man's intervention in a strange household, here with unexpectedly beneficial results, is potentially provocative; and, if Sting as the disruptive force mostly makes do with grimaces, Denholm Elliott and Joan Plowright get every ounce from their dialogue. But how ponderously it resounds, trusting to unfocussed incongruities for a laugh, which come hard when the end-product seems to be therapy by rape. Somehow the metaphors of guilt, death-in-life, mortal hypocrisies lose resonance in Mr Loncraine's opening-out and confusingly assigned flashbacks and fantasies, become too real for anything but the wrong sort of discomfort. □

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WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2736 **Set by Pat Blackford**

Why are narrative poems so seldom turned into novels? Give us the opening paragraphs of, say, Wodehouse's *Ancient Mariner,* Beryl Bainbridge's *Beowulf* or any others that occur to you. Max. 140 words, by 24 September.

No 2733 **Set by Humphrey Dumphrey**

James Cameron said of Commander Trestrail, 'He will not sell his story to the *Sun*'. We asked for verses on the theme.

Report **By Toby Jugge**

Lorna Davis complained that by insisting on eight-line stanzas we hadn't allowed room for the four-line *envoi* which Chesterton liked. Pshaw! The Complex's maxim – never apologise, never explain – is as unchanging as the law of the Medes and the Persians, so Ms Davis's letter was dispatched to the shredder with all speed. Eight green rectangles each.

My Uncle Sid, while grubbing through his attic,
Discovered some old diaries of my aunt's
Which prove beyond all doubt that though
rheumatic
She did a quite outrageous striptease dance.
He also found some fuzzy but dramatic
Photos of her in a suggestive stance
Before she left him to become a nun.
He will not sell his story to the *Sun*.

But not through any reticence or tact,
He'd sell his mother for a bag of sweets
(He did so once on holiday in fact
In one of Aden's less salubrious streets
But I digress); although the tale's compact
And nigh-on perfect for the scandal sheets
There was a court case and the convent won.
He will not sell his story to the *Sun*.

GERARD BENSON

He threw his baby sister in the sea
He made a ragout of his brother's brains;
His parents chose to criticise, so he
Wired up his father's wheelchair to the mains
And hung his mother upside-down in chains,
Then disembowelled his granny just for fun.
And yet a spark of decency remains:
He will not sell his story to the *Sun*.

He slept with every honoured household name
He loved a Duke who was a Russian spy
His orgies were notorious: thousands came
(Most of them more than once). He used to buy
Consumptive slavegirls just to watch them die.
No vile perversion was he known to shun;
But still the man can hold his head up high:
He will not sell his story to the *Sun*.

MICHAEL SWAN

Although he's very nearly forty-one,
The scandal-sheets have never had a sniff;
For, nice and naughty since he first begun,
From skiffling with that quintessential quiff,
To writhing to a rather risqué riff,
To singing as he's hardly ever done,
He keeps his upper lip – and lower – stiff:
He will not sell his story to the *Sun*.

His love-match may be game, and set to run;
Her backhand pass may truly be terriff;
Their passion may be reckoned next to none;
But should his shadows lengthen, even if
They have a teensy-weensy little tiff,
Were centre-courting suddenly no fun,
Should Sue one day come tumbling off her Cliff,
He will not sell his story to the *Sun*.

MARY HARDY-SMITH

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FIRST PERSON

Carol Rumens

Crows' feet under glass

I'VE WORN glasses since the age of 14, on and off. Frequently off, because I've found many situations where myopia is an advantage – in ignoring the domestic disorder that might otherwise prompt a dangerous fit of house-work, in failing to recognise people I'd rather not speak to, in discovering metaphors for poems (I say, is that a nude giantess or is it a pylon?) and in maintaining a low awareness of the defects of birth and ravages of time etched on my own person. As far as the latter are concerned, however, there is something to be said for keeping the glasses on, especially if, like mine, they are of mid-seventies vintage, when the fashion was for saucer-sized lenses covering a fair proportion of the upper physiog. I've increasingly chosen to keep my crows' feet under glass during latter years.

Yet one day last winter I succumbed to the idea of soft contact lenses. Glasses, after all, can in certain situations be a hindrance. Maybe the crows' feet weren't as bad as all that. Yet. So I trudged through the snow to an elegant establishment deeply carpeted, sprinkled with up-market magazines, and not a National Health frame in sight. The optician, greying, twinkling-eyed, had a certain Central European élan; surely his grandfather had dined with Freud and Adler? 'You are prepared for a little discomfort at first?' he asked me merrily. My affirmative produced what I suppose was a stock response, though it charmed my ego at the time, that such a positive attitude augured well for my future as a lens-wearer.

There followed the usual adult literacy test in which the alphabet switches mysteriously between Hebrew and Roman. These sight-tests always strike me as unscientific. Surely the inspired guesser ends up with a weaker pair of lenses than the more cautious type who waits for a couple of extra magnifications before finally deciding that the P is really a B? After the inquisition by alphabet, after the probing of the inner depths by torch-light, Herr Doktor swiftly inserted a pair of test lenses, and ushered me to a mirror. I immediately back away several paces. But by now I was feeling braced for heroism. To see clearly, to lose my illusions – in this lay true maturity and wisdom. Fine, OK, when'll they be ready? I said.

I went for my fitting still in the positive frame of mind that augured so well for my future. In a room somewhat smaller and shabbier than the one of my initiation, a young woman optician showed me my lenses on her finger-tip, little, soft, harmless fairy-caps that wouldn't hurt a fly. I got the lenses in at first dab. Now, said my optician, try taking them out yourself. Not take them out, you note, but *try* taking them out. I should have suspected something then. I have always been manually awkward. I also have a deep-seated inability to follow any instructions that begin, 'Now, with your right hand/foot/ear/nostril . . .' Being left-handed, I resent this kind of rightist chauvinism. My instruction went something as follows: start with your right eye. No, your *right* eye. Look up. Not down, *up*. Now, with the middle finger of your left hand, the *middle* finger, pull down your lower lid, and with your index finger, no, of the *same hand*, move the lens onto the white of your eye. Now with your index finger and thumb, pinch off the lens. Hey presto! No? Lens still in the eye? Never mind, it's easy really, try again.

It was my nose that was the problem. Without it, I could have got my fingers into the exact strategic spot. Unfortunately, my nose forced them to make a detour that left them at completely the wrong angle for approaching the eyeball. Why didn't Herr Doktor measure the bridge of my nose before so blithely pronouncing me a suitable subject for lenses? After what seemed like hours of patient instruction met by increasing ineptitude on my part, the optician got up and said I might do better if she left the room. Her absence made not a whit of difference. I pinched and squeezed and poked and dabbed. After each exhausting little bout I gazed hopefully at the tip of my finger; each time I was disappointed. Contact had not been made. The walls of the room closed in on me. I felt faint, I was dying of an inextractable contact lens. Where had the optician gone? I imagined her taking an extended tea-break, nibbling custard creams and discussing with Herr Doktor the latest laser treatment for the detached retina.

By the time she reappeared, I was almost hysterical. 'Don't worry', she said in a soothing way that didn't soothe, 'it happens to a lot of people. Make an appointment for a re-teach as you go out'. Deftly she flicked her fingers across my eyes and the world went pleasantly dim again. Too late I conducted some research among my friends. Sure, they loved their lenses, didn't know how they'd ever managed without them; but, er, what about *getting them out*, I suggested – had it ever been a problem? After some patient probing, they revealed their own stories of fear and fumbling. One had undergone eight re-teaches. Another would start taking her lenses out for the night at two in the afternoon. I wondered why no-one had ever mentioned this before. I suppose it is the kind of traumatic experience that the mind swiftly buries.

All this happened last January. For all I know, my lenses are still sitting sadly in their bath of Sauflon, awaiting rescue. I tend to imagine them as dry as old toe-nails mouldering in some museum of lost or unclaimed lenses – for I am sure I can't be the only coward who decided that the extraction of a lens wasn't worth risking the loss of an eyeball, and that, what with the sudden alarming close-up of the crows' feet, there is a lot to be said for the old-fashioned pair of specs. □

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RECORDS – TOP prices paid. Send direct or SAE for quote. Slipped Discs, 51 Meyrick Street, Pembroke Dock, Dyfed.

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DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH Post No. HE 1

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This is a key post as head of a department employing approximately 485 people in a city with a municipal housing stock of nearly 50,000 Council dwellings.

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The post holder will direct and manage the department. He/she will advise the Council on and assist in the formulation of housing policies and activities and, with the aid of the Chief Environmental Health Officer, the environmental health aspects.

A review of the Environmental Health function is being carried out and it is possible that this may become a separate department or that other changes will take place. The grade for this post, however, will not be changed.

Applicants should possess an appropriate professional qualification, preferably the Institute of Housing, and must have wide experience of housing management.

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Application forms and further details are available from the Chief Personnel Officer, Municipal Offices, Trippett Street, George Street, Kingston upon Hull, Tel: (0482) 222163, to whom they should be returned by 27 September, 1982.

City of Kingston upon Hull

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DISTRICT SECRETARY
£11,487-£13,044

required from 1 January, 1983. We are looking for an energetic and enterprising person, preferably with adult education experience to coordinate the work of this lively District of the WEA.

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Details from: Mrs. Ann Risman, District Secretary
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For further details and application form write to:
RVA, 1 Amwell St.,
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Applicants must have a good understanding and knowledge of housing issues and experience in preparing papers and briefing material on this important area of policy.

Applicants must also be members of the Labour Party and a background of activity in the Party in the wider Labour movement would be of considerable advantage.

Application forms and conditions of employment may be obtained from **The Administrative and Personnel Officer, The Labour Party, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT. (Tel: 01-703 0833).**
The closing date for applications is Monday, 27 September, 1972.

BRITISH ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION
Incorporating the Variety Artistes' Federation

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The Performers' Union requires a Senior Official to head one of its Organising Departments. Candidates must have either experience as a trade union official and/or experience in one or other of the branches of the entertainment industry. The salary is currently being reviewed but will not be less than **£11,000 p.a.** Application form from **Peter Plouviez, 8 Harley Street, London W1N 2AB.**

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Frances Sullivan, Advice Centre in the Blue, 190 Southwark Park Road, London, SE16. Tel: 01-231 2471.

OV SELECTION CATERS for the more mature person as well as graduates and 'A' level students with typing and office skills. Phone Odette Veazey, OV Selection (Emp. Agy.) Abford House, 15 Wilton Road, London, SW1V 1LT. 01-828 8345.

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Further particulars and application forms are available from:

The Staffing Officer
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Borough Road, London SE1 0AA
Telephone: 01-928 8989 ext 2355

Closing date for applications is: 4 October 1982

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Meetings

ICA EVENTS, The Mall, London SW1. 01-930 3647. GOOD NEWS BAD NEWS series – Tues. 14 Sept. 7.30. OUR BOYS HUNT THE TRAITORS: The Falklands and the Press plus IN CONVERSATION series – Tues. 14 Sept. 1.00. JOHN BERGER: Another Way of Telling and on Thurs. 16 Sept. 1.00 GRAHAM SWIFT with HERMOINE LEE: Shuttlecock. All tickets £1.25 bookable by telephone (ICA Day Pass 40p).

THEOSOPHY: s.a.e. for pamphlets, booklist, Informal Question/Answer meeting, Sunday, 12 September, 8 p.m. 'Conversations on Occultism'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

Ballet

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE. EC1. CC 01-278 8916 (5 lines). 01-200 0200 (24 hour instant booking). Group sales 01-379 6061. Until 11 September. Evenings 7.30, Saturday Mat. 2.30.
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Theatres

BARBICAN THEATRE. 01-628 8795, cc 01-638 8891, 24-hour info. 01-628 2295. Few day seats £3 from 10 a.m.
ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY
'ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL' 10-15 September, 'HENRY IV' Pt 1, 16 September. THE PIT – 'MONEY' by Bulwer-Lytton 10-15 September. 'OUR FRIENDS IN THE NORTH' by Peter Flannery 16 September.

NATIONAL THEATRE. 01-928 2252. Olivier (open stage) 'Don Quixote', 'Schweyk in the Second World War'. Lyttelton (proscenium stage) 'The Importance of Being Earnest'. No perfs. 'Way Upstream' this month, returns October. Cottesloe (small auditorium) 'Beggar's Opera, 'The Spanish Tragedy', 'Don Juan'. See daily press for dates and times, or ring recorded information 01-928 2256.

THEATRE GOERS please note: cc – Credit cards S-Student standby.

LISTINGS

Social/Cultural
Radical/Arts
Political

10-18 Sept

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FRI 10 SEPT

10-12 SEPTEMBER, LONDON W1. Socialist Society Summer School. 'The Search for a Viable Socialist Programme'. Workshops. Speakers include: Tony Benn, Peter Tatchell, Robin Blackburn, Ken Livingstone and others. Plus evening event. University of London Union, Malet Street. **Tel: 01-734 8501.**

10-12 SEPTEMBER, MATLOCK. Conference – 'The Politics of Information.' Spkrs.: Phillip Whitehead MP., Peter Hennessey, David McKie, Prof. Anthony King, Dr Tony Barker. Details: Politics Association, 14 Wakefield Close, Strood, Rochester, Kent.

10-12 SEPTEMBER, OXFORD. Adlerian Society Weekend Workshop, 'Personal Relationships.' St. Hilda's College. **01-789 8086.**

10-24 SEPTEMBER, LONDON SW1. Stephen Dwoskin Retrospective. ICA Cinematheque, The Mall. **Tel: 01-930 3647.**

SAT 11 SEPT

BIRMINGHAM. 'Trade Unions and the Third World'. Speakers – Abisha Kupfuma, David Ward. 7.30 p.m. Fircroft, Selly Oak Colleges.

11-12 SEPT. LONDON SW1. Alexander Korda film season – 'The Thief of Baghdad'. (GB 1940 £1.25. 3 p.m. ICA, The Mall. **Tel: 01-930 3647.**

LONDON W1. Mass Picket of the Chilean Embassy, 12 Devonshire St. Org. by Chile Solidarity Campaign.

11-12 SEPTEMBER, CARDIFF. Weekend school 'Beyond the Nuclear Free Zone'. Speakers: Frank Barnaby, Duncan Rees and others. Tel: Cardiff CND, **0222-493196.**

SUN 12 SEPT

EDINBURGH. Meeting – Lothian Action Group for a Woman's Right to Work. 2.30 p.m. Trades Council, 14 Picardy Place.

SHEFFIELD. 3rd Anti-Nuclear Festival. Bands, stalls, theatre, refreshments, etc. 1-6 p.m. Weston Park.

MON 13 SEPT

KINGSTON, SURREY. 'Nuclear Free Kingston' meeting. Spkrs: Duncan Campbell, Illtyd Harrington. 7.30 p.m. United Reformed Church Hall, Eden St.

13-15 SEPT. CROYDON. 1982 Theatre Co. presents Brecht's 'In The Jungle Of Cities'. 7.30 p.m. Croydon Warehouse Theatre, 62 Dingwall Rd. **Tel: 01-680 4060.**

DUDLEY. Late night Poems & Pints with Adrian Mitchell. 9.30 p.m. The Crown, Wolverhampton St.

13-18 SEPT. BELFAST. Peter O'Donnell's 'Mr. Fothergill's Murder' with Frank Windsor, Ruta Lenska, David Horovitch. 7.30 p.m. Grand Opera House, Gt. Victoria St. Tel: 0232-241919.

TUES 14 SEPT

LONDON W12. W.E.A. Course, "The Personal and the Political". 10 weeks, Tuesdays from 14 Sept. 6.30 pm. Project Enterprise, 23 Askew Cres.

LONDON SW1. 'The Falklands and the Press'. Newspaper editors discuss the issues with defence correspondents. 7.30 p.m. Also John Berger talks about the groundwork for a new theory of photography and his work generally. 1 p.m. in the Cinema. ICA, The Mall. **Tel: 01-930 3647.**

LONDON SW11. 'Social' For Labour Campaign For Criminal Justice. £2. 8 p.m. Old Town Hall, Lavender Hill.

LONDON W12. 'The Personal and the Political'. WEA 10-week course starts. Tuesdays. 6.30 p.m. Project Enterprise, 23 Askew Crescent.

WED 15 SEPT

CARDIFF. 'Trade Unions and the 3rd World'. Speakers – Abisha Kupfuma, Carl Wright, David Ward. 7.30 p.m. Temple of Peace, Cathay's Park.

LONDON W1. Egyptian lecture – 'Amarna' by B. J. Kemp. 6 p.m. Egyptian Education Bureau, 4 Chesterfield Gardens. **01-491 7729.**

BIRMINGHAM. 'Reporting Rape' meeting. Press coverage of rape. 7.30 p.m. Crown Pub, Corporation St. **Tel: 021-359 4192.**

GLASGOW. 'Policies Not Proscriptions' Rally. D. Canavan, E. Clarke, G. Galloway, M. Fyfe. 7.15 p.m. North British Hotel. (Lab. Co-ord. Ctte. (Scot.)).

THURS 16 SEPT

MANCHESTER. 'Trade Unions and the 3rd World'. 7 p.m. St. Paul's House, Manchester University, Oxford Road.

LONDON SW1. Graham Swift discusses his novel 'Shuttlecock' with Hermione Lee. 1 p.m. Seminar Room, ICA, The Mall. **Tel: 01-930 3647.**

16-18 SEPT. CROYDON. Three Women Mime present 'Follies Berserk'. "Infectious hilarity . . ." 7.30 p.m. Croydon Warehouse Theatre, 62 Dingwall Rd. **Tel: 01-680 4060.**

LONDON N10. Meeting. Muswell Hill CND. Michael Pentz (Vice-Chair. CND) speaks. 7.45 p.m. United Reform Church, Tetherdown.

LONDON N7. 'End Loans to Southern Africa'. Special planning meeting. New people welcome. 6 p.m. at War on Want, 467 Caledonian Rd. **Tel: 01-609 0211.**

FRI 17 SEPT

LETCHWORTH, HERTS. 'Labour's Programme 1982' – Michael Meacher MP, 8pm. 50p. Brotherhood Hall, Gernon Rd.

17-19 SEPTEMBER, SHEFFIELD. A.C.W. Conference – 'Community Health Issues'. 60 workshops. Food, accommodation, creche, entertainment. Details: Victoria Grandon **0742 77870.**

17-19 SEPT. READING. CND Activists Training Weekend. £8. Registration details from Lindy Chatting, Reading CND, P.O. Box 158, Reading, Berks.

KENDAL. Joan Lestor at Kendal L.P. meeting. 7.30 p.m. Kirkland Hall.

SAT 18 SEPT

ARDROSSAN. Day school 'Third World Development'. Speaker – Frank McElhone, MP. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Resources Centre.

LONDON SE1. Conference. Women's Campaign for Jobs. 11 a.m. County Hall.

LONDON W8. Indian cooking seminar. Meera Taneja demonstrates Central Indian cuisine. £9 inc. authentic lunch. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High St. **Tel: 01-602 3252 ext. 266.**

FORTHCOMING

UNTIL 6 OCTOBER, LONDON NW5. 'Summer Madness'. Exhibition of textile hangings by Trinidadian artist Althea McNish. Peoples Gallery, 73 Prince of Wales Rd., Kentish Town. Closed Suns. and Mons.

TUESDAYS till 30 NOVEMBER, LONDON EC3. Lunchtime talks 1.10 p.m. on progress of BILLINGSGATE EXCAVATION. 25p. Public Viewing Gallery, Lower Thames Street. Public viewing daily.

20 SEPTEMBER, LONDON NW5. Marxism, introductory course. Controversies in Contemporary Marxism; Britain in the 30's. Starts w/c 20 Sept. Camden Institute, Holmes Rd. **01-267 1414.**

21 SEPTEMBER, LONDON SW1. 'The Free Media and its Enemies'. Speakers include – Charles Wintour, Peter Osnos, Michel Tatu, Graham Murdoch. Martin Walker in the Chair. 7.30 p.m. ICA, The Mall. **Tel: 01-930 3647.** £1.25.

21 SEPTEMBER, LONDON WC1. Start of 10 sessions on 'Improving Personal Relationships'. Adlerian Society, Community Rooms, Millman St. **Tel: 01-789 8086.**

23 SEPTEMBER, BOURNEMOUTH. Anti-Nuclear Campaign fringe meeting at Liberal Party Assembly. 8 p.m. West Cliff Hall Hotel, West Cliff. **Tel: 0742-754681.**

25 SEPTEMBER, MANCHESTER. 'Foreign Policy Implications of British Nuclear Disarmament', Dayschool at Withington Adult Education Centre, Mauldeth Rd., M14. 10am-4pm. Details: 59 Tintern Ave., Manchester M20 8ND.

2 OCTOBER, SHEFFIELD. 'Defence Policies in the '80s' 9.30 a.m.-4 p.m. Dayschool – speakers include April Carter, Anthony Arblaster, John Field, Phil Asquith, Mary Kaldor. At Bow Centre. **0742-322690.**

2 OCTOBER, SHEFFIELD. 'The Peace Movement after the Falklands' Public meeting. Speakers include E. P. Thompson, Kate Soper, Richard Carbon MEP, Jean McCrindle. 7.30 p.m. City Hall. **0742-615388.**

4 OCTOBER. LONDON W1. 'A Social Democratic interpretation of History' – Peter Clarke. History Workshop seminar. 6.45 p.m., Upstairs at the 'Black Horse', 6 Rathbone Place.

30 OCTOBER. WEMBLEY. International Conference on Active Birth. Details: Active Birth Movement, 32 Cholmeley Crescent, London N6 5JR. Tel: **01-348 4636.**

5-6 NOVEMBER, LONDON WC1. Fifth Socialist Book Fair. Complete display of socialist, radical and trade union literature. (Details of stands, etc. Tel: Bookmarks 01-802 6145.) Camden Town Hall, Euston Road.

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad. under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

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